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WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS

AND OF SCOTLAND:

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative.

WITH A GLOSSARY.

Revised by

ALEXANDER LEIGHTON,

ONE OF THE ORIGINAL EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

VOL. V.

EDINBURGH:

WILLIAM P. NIMMO.

PR5839
W2W5
v.5

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WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE CRIPPLE; OR, EBENEZER THE DISOWNED.

It is proverbial to say, with reference to particular constitutions or habits of body, that May is a *trying* month, and we have known what it is to experience its trials in the sense signified. With our grandmothers too, yea, and with our grandfathers also, May was held to be an unlucky month. Nevertheless, it is a lovely, it is a beautiful month, and the forerunner of the most healthy of the twelve. It is like a timid maiden blushing into womanhood, wooing and yet shrinking from the admiration which her beauty compels. The buds, the blossoms, the young leaves, the tender flowers, the glittering dew-drops, and the song of birds, burst from the grasp of winter as if the God of nature whispered in the sunbeams—"Let there be life!" But it is in the morning only, and before the business of the world summons us to its mechanical and artificial realities, that the beauties of May can be felt in all their freshness. We read of the glories of Eden, and that the earth was cursed because of man's transgression; yet, when we look abroad upon the glowing landscape, above us, and around us, and behold the pure heavens like a sea of music floating over us, and hear the earth answer it back in varied melody, while mountain, wood, and dale, seem dreaming in the sound, and stealing into loveliness, we almost wonder that a bad man should exist in the midst of a world that is still

so beautiful, and where every object around him is a representative of the wisdom, the goodness, the mercy, the purity, and the omnipotence of his Creator. There is a language in the very wild-flowers among our feet that breathes a lesson of virtue. We can appreciate the feeling with which the poet beheld

"The *last* rose of summer left blooming alone;"

but in the firstlings of the spring, the primrose, the lily, and their early train, there is an appeal that passes beyond our senses. They are like the lispings and the smiles of infancy—lowly preachers, emblems of our own immortality, and we love them like living things. They speak to us of childhood and the scenes of youth, and *memory* dwells in their very fragrance. Yes, May is a beautiful month—it is a month of fair sights and of sweet sounds. To it belongs the lowly primrose blushing by the brae-side in congregated beauty, with here and there a cowslip bending over them like a lover among the flowers; the lily hanging its head by the brook that reflects its image, like a bride at the altar, as if conscious of its own loveliness; the hardy daisy on the green sward, like a proud man struggling in penury with the storms of fate. Now, too, the blossoms on a thousand trees unfold their rainbow hues; the tender leaves seem instinct with life, and expand to the sunbeams; and the bright fields, like an emerald sea, wave their first undulations to the breeze. The lark pours down a flood of melody on the nest of its mate, and the linnet trills a lay of love to its partner from the yellow furze. The chaffinch chants in the hedge its sweet but unvaried *line of music;* the thrush hymns his bold roundelay; and the blackbird swells the chorus; while the bird of spring sends its voice from the glens, like a wandering echo lost between love and sadness; and the swallow, newly returned from warmer climes or its winter sleep,

"Twitters from the straw-built shed."

The insect tribe leap into being, countless in numbers and matchless in livery, and their low hum swims like the embodiment of a dream in the air. The May-fly invites the angler to the river, while the minnow gambols in the brook; the young salmon sports and sparkles in the stream, and the grey trout glides slowly beneath the shadow of a rock in the deep pool. To enjoy for a single hour in a May morning the luxuries which nature spreads around—to wander in its fields and in its woods—to feel ourselves a part of God's glad creation—to *feel* the gowan under our feet, and health circulating through our veins with the refreshing breeze, is a recipe worth all in the Materia Medica.

Now, it was before sunrise on such a morning in May as I have described, that a traveller left the Black Bull in Wooler, and proceeded to the Cheviots. He took his route by way of Earle and Langleeford; and, at the latter place, leaving the long and beautiful glen, began to ascend the mountain. On the cairn, which is perhaps about five hundred yards from what is called the extreme summit of the mountain, he met an old and intelligent shepherd, from whom he heard many tales, the legends of the mountains—and amongst others, the following story:—

Near the banks of one of the romantic streams which take their rise among the Cheviots, stood a small and pleasant, and what might be termed respectable or genteel-looking building. It stood like the home of solitude, excluded by mountains from the world. Beneath it, the rivulet wandered over its rugged bed; to the east rose Cheviot, the giant of the hills; to the west, lesser mountains reared their fantastic forms, thinly studded here and there with dwarf alders, which the birds of heaven had planted, and their progeny had nestled in their branches; to the north and the south stretched a long and secluded glen, where beauty blushed in the arms of wildness—and thick woods, where the young fir and the oak of the ancient forest grew together,

flourished beneath the shelter of the hills. Fertility also smiled by the sides of the rivulet, though the rising and setting sun threw the shadows of barrenness over it. Around the cottage stood a clump of solitary firs, and behind it an enclosure of alders, twisted together, sheltered a garden from the storms that swept down the hills.

Now, many years ago, a stranger woman, who brought with her a female domestic and a male infant, became the occupant of this house among the hills. She lived more luxuriously than the sheep-farmers in the neighbourhood, and her accent was not that of the Borders. She was between forty and fifty years of age, and her stature and strength were beyond the ordinary stature and strength of women. Her manners were repulsive, and her bearing haughty; but it seemed the haughtiness of a weak and uneducated mind. Her few neighbours, simple though they were, and little as they saw or knew of the world, its inhabitants and its manners, perceived that the stranger who had come amongst them had not been habituated to the affluence or easy circumstances with which she was then surrounded. The child also was hard-favoured, and of a disagreeable countenance; his back was strangely deformed; his feet were distorted, and his limbs of unequal length. No one could look upon the child without a feeling of compassion, save the woman who was his mother, his nurse, or his keeper (for none knew in what relation she stood to him), and she treated him as a persecutor, who hated his sight, and was weary of his existence.

She gave her name as Mrs Baird; and, as the child grew up, she generally in derision called him "*Æsop*," or, in hatred, "the little monster!" but the woman-servant called him Ebenezer, though she treated him with a degree of harshness only less brutal than she whom he began to call mother. We shall, therefore, in his history mention him by the name of Ebenezer Baird. As he grew in years, the dis-

agreeable expression of his countenance became stronger, his deformity and lameness increased, and the treatment he had experienced added to both.

When nine years of age, he was sent to a boarding-school about twelve miles distant. Here a new series of persecutions awaited him. Until the day of his entering the school, he was almost ignorant that there was an alphabet. He knew not a letter. He had seen one or two books, but he knew not their use: he had never seen any one look upon them; he regarded them merely as he did a picture—a piece of useless furniture, or a plaything. Lame as he was, he had climbed the steep and the dripping precipice for the eggs of the water-ouzel, sought among the crags for the young of the gorgeous kingfisher, or climbed the tallest trees in quest of the crested wrens, which chirped and fluttered in invisible swarms among the branches.* The birds were to him companions; he wished to rear their young, that they might love him, for there was a lack of something in his heart—he knew not what it was—but it was the void of being beloved, of being regarded. It is said that nature abhors a vacuum, and so did the heart of Ebenezer. He knew not what name to give it, but he longed for something that would show a liking for him, and to which he could show a liking in return. The heart is wicked, but it is not unsocial—its affections wither in solitariness. When he strolled forth on these rambles about the glen, having asked the permission of his mother or keeper (call her what you will) before he went, "Go, imp! Æsop!" she was wont to exclaim, "and I shall pray that you may break your neck

* The water-ouzel, the kingfisher, and the crested wren, abound in the vicinity of the Cheviots, though the latter beautiful little creature is generally considered as quite a *rara avis;* and last year one being shot about Cumberland, the circumstance went the round of the newspapers! But the bird is not rare, it is only difficult to be seen, and generally flutters among the leaves and near the top branches.

before you return." There were no farmers' or shepherds' children within several miles: he had seen some of them, and when they had seen him, they had laughed at his deformity—they had imitated his lameness, and contorted their countenances into a caricatured resemblance of his. Such were poor Ebenezer's acquirements, and such his acquaintance with human nature, when he entered the boarding-school. A primer was put into his hands. "What must I do with it?" thought Ebenezer. He beheld the rod of correction in the hands of the teacher, and he trembled—for his misshapen shoulders were familiar with such an instrument. He heard others read, he saw them write; and he feared, wondered, and trembled the more. He thought that he would be called upon to do the same, and he knew he could not. He had no idea of *learning*—he had never heard of such a thing. He thought that he must do as he saw others doing at once, and he cast many troubled looks at the lord of a hundred boys. When the name of "Ebenezer Baird" was called out, he burst into tears, he sobbed, terror overwhelmed him. But when the teacher approached him kindly, took him from his seat, placed him between his knees, patted his head, and desired him to speak after him, the heart of the little cripple was assured, and more than assured; it was the first time he had experienced kindness, and he could have fallen on the ground and hugged the knees of his master. The teacher, indeed, found Ebenezer the most ignorant scholar he had ever met with, but he was no tyrant of the birch, though to his pupils

"A man severe he was, and stern to view;"

and though he had all the manners and austerity of the old school about him, he did not lay his head upon the pillow with his arm tired by the incessant use of the ferula He was touched with the simplicity and the extreme ignorance of his new boarder, and he felt also for his lameness and deformity. Thrice he went over the alphabet with his pupil,

commencing, "*Big Aw—Little Aw*," and having got over *b*, he told him to remember that *c* was like a half-moon. "Ye'll aye mind *c* again," added he; "think ye *see* the moon." Thus they went on to *g*, and he asked him what the carters said to their horses when they wished them to go faster; but this Ebenezer could not tell—carts and horses were sights that he had seen as objects of wonder. They are but seldom seen amongst the hills now, and in those days they were almost unknown. Getting over *h*, he strove to impress *i* upon the memory of his pupil, by touching the solitary grey orbit in his countenance (for Ebenezer had but one), and asking him what he called it. "My *e'e*," answered Ebenezer.

"No, sir, you must not say your *e'e*, but your *eye*—mind that; and that letter is *I*."

The teacher went on, showing him that he could not forget round O, and crooked S; and in truth, after his first lesson, Ebenezer was master of these two letters. And, afterwards, when the teacher, in trying him promiscuously through the alphabet, would inquire, "What letter is this?" —"I no ken," the cripple would reply; "but I'm sure it's no O, and it's no S." Within a week he was master of the six-and-twenty mystical symbols, with the exception of four—and those four were *b* and *d*, *p* and *q*. Ebenezer could not for three months be brought to distinguish the *b* from the *d*, nor the *p* from the *q*; but he had never even heard that he had a right hand and a left until he came to the school —and how could it be expected?

Scarce, however, had he mastered the alphabet, until the faculties of the deformed began to expand. He now both understood and felt what it was to learn. He passed from class to class with a rapidity that astonished his teacher. He could not join in the boisterous sports of his schoolfellows, and while they were engaged in their pastime, he sought solitude, and his task accompanied him. He possessed

strong natural talents, and his infirmities gave them the assistance of industry. His teacher noted these things in the cripple, and he was gratified with them; but he hesitated to express his feelings openly, lest the charge of partiality should be brought against him. Ebenezer, however, had entered the academy as the butt of his schoolfellows—they mocked, they mimicked, they tormented, they despised, or affected to despise him; and his talents and progress, instead of abating their persecutions, augmented them. His teacher was afraid to show him more kindness than he showed to others; and his schoolfellows gloried in annoying the cripple—they persecuted, they shunned, they hated him more than even his mother did. He began to hate the world, for he had found none that would love him. His teacher was the only human being that had ever whispered to him words of praise or of kindness, and that had always been in cold, guarded, and measured terms.

Before he was eighteen, he had acquired all the knowledge that his teacher could impart, and he returned to the cottage among the mountains. There, however, he was again subjected to a persecution more barbarous than that which he had met with from his schoolfellows. Mrs Baird mocked, insulted, and drove him from her presence; and her domestic showed him neither kindness nor respect. In stature, he scarcely exceeded five feet; and his body was feeble as well as deformed. The cruelty with which he had been treated had given an asperity to his temper, and made him almost a hater of the human race; and these feelings had lent their character to his countenance, marking its naturally harsh expression with suspicion and melancholy.

He was about five-and-twenty when the pangs and the terrors of death fell upon her whom he regarded as his parent. She died—as a sinner dies—with insulted eternity frowning to receive her. A few minutes before her death, she desired the cripple to approach her bedside. She fixed

her closing eyes, which affection had never lighted, upon his. She informed him that he was not her son.

"Oh, tell me, then, whose son I am! Who are my parents?" he exclaimed, eagerly. "Speak! speak!"

"Your parents!" she muttered; and remorse and ignorance held her departing soul in their grasp. She struggled; she again continued: "Your parents! no, Ebenezer, no! I dare not name them! I have sworn—I have sworn! and a death-bed is no time to break an oath!"

"Speak! speak! Tell me, as you hope for heaven!" cried the cripple, with his thin, bony fingers grasping the wrists of the dying woman.

"Monster! monster!" she screamed, wildly, and in terror, "leave me—leave me! You are provided for—open that chest—the chest—the chest!"

Ebenezer loosed his grasp; he sprang towards a strong chest which stood in the room. "The keys! the keys!" he exclaimed, wildly; and again hurrying to the bed, he violently pulled a bunch of keys from beneath her pillow. But while he applied them to the chest, the herald of death rattled in the throat of its victim; and, with one agonising throe and a deep groan, her spirit escaped, and her body lay a corpse upon the bed.

He opened the chest, and in it he found securities, which settled upon him, under the name of Ebenezer Baird, five thousand pounds. But there was nothing which threw light on his parentage—nothing to inform who he was, or why he was there.

The body of her who had never shed a tear over him he accompanied to the grave. But now a deeper gloom fell upon him. He met but few men, and the few he met shunned him, for there was a wildness and a bitterness in his words—a railing against the world—which they wished not to hear. He fancied, too, that they despised him—that their eyes were ever examining the form of his deformities;

and he returned their glance with a scowl, and their words with the accents of hatred. Even as he passed the solitary farmhouse, the younger children fled in terror, and the elder laughed, or pointed towards him the finger of curiosity. All these things fell upon the heart of the cripple, and turned the human kindness of his bosom into gall. His companions became the solitude of the mountains, and the silence of the woods. They heard his bitter soliloquies without reviling him, or echo answered him in tones of sympathy more mournful than his own. He sought a thing that he might love, that might unlock his prisoned heart, or give life to its blighted feelings. He loved the very primrose, because it was a thing of beauty, and shrank not from his deformity as man did. To him it gave forth its sweetness, and its leaves withered not at his touch; and he bent and kissed the flower that smiled upon him whom his kind avoided. He courted the very storms of winter, for they shunned him not, but spent their fury on his person, unconscious of its form. The only living thing that regarded him, or that had ever evinced affection towards him, was a dog, of the mastiff kind, which ever followed at his side, licked his hand, and received its food from it. And on this living thing all the affections that his heart ever felt were expended. He loved it as a companion, a friend, and protector; and he knew it was not ungrateful—it never avoided him; but, when mockery or insult was offered to its master, it growled, and looked in his face, as if asking permission to punish the offender.

Such was the life that he had passed until he was between thirty and forty years of age. Still he continued his solitary rambles, having a feeling for everything around him but man. Man only was his persecutor—man only despised him. His own kind and his own kindred had shut him out from them and disowned him—his sight had been hateful to them, and his form loathsome. He avoided the very

sun, for it revealed his shadow; but he wandered in rapture, gazing on the midnight heavens, calling the stars by name, while his soul was lifted up with their glory, and his deformity lost and overshadowed in the depth of their magnificence. He loved the flowers of day, the song of morning birds, and the wildness or beauty of the landscape; but these dwindled, and drew not forth his soul as did the awful gorgeousness of night, with its ten thousand worlds lighted up, burning, sparkling, glimmering in immensity—the gems that studded the throne of the Eternal. While others slept, the deformed wandered on the mountains, holding communion with the heavens.

About the period we refer to, a gay party came upon a visit to a gentleman whose mansion was situated about three miles from the cottage of the cripple. As they rode out, they frequently passed him in his wanderings. And when they did so, some turned to gaze on him with a look of prying curiosity, others laughed and called to their companions—and the indignation of Ebenezer was excited, and the frown grew black upon his face.

He was wandering in a wood in the glen, visiting his favourite wild-flowers (for he had many that he visited daily, and each was familiar to him as the face of man to man—he rejoiced when they budded, blossomed, and laughed in their summer joy, and he grieved when they withered and died away), when a scream of distress burst upon his ear. His faithful mastiff started, and answered to the sound. He hurried from the wood to whence the sound proceeded as rapidly as his lameness would admit. The mastiff followed by his side, and, by its signs of impatience, seemed eager to increase its speed, though it would not forsake him. The cries of distress continued, and became louder. On emerging from the wood, he perceived a young lady rushing wildly towards it, and behind her, within ten yards, followed an infuriated bull. A few moments more, and she must

have fallen its victim. With an eager howl, the dog sprang from the side of its master, and stood between the lady and her pursuer. Ebenezer forgot his lameness and the feebleness of his frame, and he hastened at his utmost speed to the rescue of a human being. Even at that moment a glow of delight passed through his heart, that the despised cripple would save the life of a fellow-mortal—of one of the race that shunned him. Ere he approached, the lady had fallen, exhausted and in terror, on the ground. The mastiff kept the enraged animal at bay, and, with a strength such as he had never before exhibited, Ebenezer raised the lady in his arms, and bore her to the wood. He placed her against a tree: the stream passed by within a few yards, and he brought water in the palms of his hands, and knelt over her, to bathe her temples and her fair brow. Her brow was indeed fair, and her face beautiful beyond all that he had looked upon. Her golden hair in wavy ringlets fell upon her shoulders —but her deep blue eyes were closed. Her years did not appear to be more than twenty.

"Beautiful!—beautiful!" exclaimed the cripple, as he dropped the water on her face, and gazed on it as he spoke —"it is wondrous beautiful! But she will open her eyes —she will turn from me as doth her race!—as from the animal that pursued her!—yet, sure she is beautiful!" and again, as he spoke, Ebenezer sighed.

The fair being recovered—she raised her eyes—she gazed on his face, and turned not away from it. She expressed no false horror on beholding his countenance—no affected revulsion at the sight of his deformity; but she looked upon him with gratitude—she thanked him with tears. The cripple started—his heart burned. To be gazed on with kindness, to be thanked, and with tears, and by one so fair, so young, so beautiful, was to him so strange, so new, he half doubted the reality of the scene before him. Before the kindness and gratitude that beamed from her eyes, the

misanthropy that had frozen up his bosom began to dissolve, and the gloom on his features died away, as a vapour before the face of the morning sun. New thoughts fired his imagination—new feelings transfixed his heart. Her smile fell like a sunbeam on his soul, where light had never before dawned; her accents of gratitude, from the moment they were delivered, became the music of his memory. He found an object on the earth that he could love—or shall we say that he *did* love; for he felt as though already her existence were mysteriously linked to his. We are no believers in what is termed *love at first sight*. Some romance-writers hold it up as an established doctrine, and love-sick boys and moping girls will make oath to the creed. But there never was love at first sight that a week's perseverance could not wear away. It holds no intercourse with the heart, but is a mere *fancy* of the eye; as a man would fancy a horse, a house, or a picture, which he desires to purchase. Love is not the offspring of an hour or a day, nor is it the *ignis fatuus* which plays about the brain, and disturbs the sleep of the youth and the maiden in their teens. It slowly steals and dawns upon the heart, as day imperceptibly creeps over the earth, first with the tinged cloud—the grey and the clearer dawn—the approaching, the rising, and the risen sun—blending into each other a brighter and a brighter shade; but each indistinguishable in their progress and blending, as the motion of the pointers on a watch, which move unobserved as time flies, and we mark not the silent progress of light till it envelop us in its majesty. Such is the progress of pure, holy, and enduring love. It springs not from mere sight, but its radiance grows with esteem; it is the whisper of sympathy, unity of feeling, and mutual reverence, which increases with a knowledge of each other, until but one pulse seems to throb in two bosoms. The feelings which now swelled in the bosom of Ebenezer Baird were not the true and only love which springs from es-

teem, but they were akin to it. For though the beauty of the fair being he had rescued had struck his eye, it was not her beauty that melted the misanthropy of his heart, but the tear of gratitude, the voice of thanks, the glance that turned not away from him, the smile — the first that woman had bestowed on him — that entered his soul. They came from the heart, and they spoke to the heart.

She informed him that her name was Maria Bradbury, and that she was one of the party then on a visit to the gentleman in his neighbourhood. He offered to accompany her to the house, and she accepted his offer. But it was necessary to pass near the spot where he had rescued her from the fury of the enraged bull. As they drew towards the side of the wood, they perceived that the bull was gone, but the noble mastiff, the friend, companion, and defender of the cripple, lay dead before them. Ebenezer wrung his hands, he mourned over his faithful guardian.

"Friend! poor Friend!" he cried (the name of the mastiff was Friend), "hast thou, too, left me? Thou, of all the things that lived, alone didst love thy master! Pardon me, lady, pardon an outcast; but until this hour I have never experienced friendship from man nor kindness from woman. The human race have treated me as a thing that belonged not to the same family with themselves; they have persecuted or mocked me, and I have hated them. Start not—hatred is an alien to my soul—it was not born there, it was forced upon it—but I hate not you—no! no! You have spoken kindly to me, you have smiled on me!—the despised, the disowned Ebenezer will remember you. That poor dog alone, of all living things, showed affection for me. But he died in a good cause! Poor Friend! poor Friend!—where shall I find a companion now?" and the tears of the cripple ran down his cheeks as he spoke.

Maria wept also, partly for the fate of the noble animal

that had died in her deliverance, and partly from the sorrow of her companion; for there is a sympathy in tears.

"Ha! you weep!" cried the cripple; "you weep for poor Friend and for me. Bless thee—bless thee, fair one! they are the first that were ever shed for my sake! I thought there was not a tear on earth for me."

He accompanied her to the lodge of the mansion where she was then residing, and there he left her, though she invited him to accompany her, that he might also receive the congratulations of her friends.

She related to them her deliverance. "Ha! little Ebenezer turned a hero!" cried one; "Ebenezer the cripple become a knight-errant!" said another. But they resolved to visit him in a body, and return him their thanks.

But the soul of the deformed was now changed, and his countenance, though still melancholy, had lost its asperity. His days became a dream, his existence a wish. For the first time he entertained the hope of happiness; it was vain, romantic, perhaps we might say absurd, but he cherished it.

Maria spoke much of the courage, the humanity, the seeming loneliness, and the knowledge of the deformed, to her friends; and their entertainer, with his entire party of visiters, with but one exception, a few days afterwards, proceeded to the cottage of Ebenezer, to thank him for his intrepidity. The exception we have alluded to was a Lady Helen Dorrington, a woman of a proud and haughty temper, and whose personal attractions, if she ever possessed any, were now disfigured by the attacks of a violent temper, and the *crow-feet* and the *wrinkles* which threescore years imprint on the fairest countenance. She excused herself by saying, that the sight of deformed people affected her. Amongst the party who visited the cripple was her son, Francis Dorrington, a youth of two-and-twenty, who was haughty, fiery, and impetuous as his mother. He sought

the hand of Maria Bradbury, and he now walked by her side.

Ebenezer received them coldly; amongst them were some who were wont to mock him as they passed, and he now believed that they had come to gratify curiosity, by gazing on his person as on a wild animal. But, when he saw the smile upon Maria's lips, the benign expression of her glance, and her hand held forth to greet him, his coldness vanished, and joy, like a flash of sunshine, lighted up his features. Yet he liked not the impatient scowl with which Francis Dorrington regarded her attention towards him, nor the contempt which moved visibly on his lip, when she listened delighted to the words of the despised cripple. He seemed to act as though her eyes should be fixed on him alone—her words addressed only to him. Jealousy entered the soul of the deformed; and shall we say that the same feeling was entertained by the gay and the haughty Dorrington? It was. He felt that, insignificant as the outward appearance of the cripple was, his soul was that of an intellectual giant, before the exuberance of whose power the party were awed, and Maria lost in admiration. His tones were musical as his figure was unsightly, and his knowledge universal as his person was diminutive. He discoursed with a poet's tongue on the beauty of the surrounding scenery; he defined the botany and geology of the mountains. He traced effect to cause, and both to their Creator. The party marvelled while the deformed spoke; and he repelled the scowl and contempt of his rival with sarcasm that scathed like passing lightning. These things produced feelings of jealousy also in the breast of Francis Dorrington; though from Maria Bradbury he had never received one smile of encouragement. On their taking leave, the entertainer of the party invited Ebenezer to his house, but the latter refused; he feared to mingle with society, for oft as he had associated with man, he had been ren-

dered their sport—the thing they persecuted—the butt of their irony.

For many days the cripple met, or rather sought, Maria in his solitary rambles; for she, too, loved the solitude of the mountains or the silence of the woods, which is broken only by the plaintive note of the wood-pigeon, the *chirm* of the linnet, the song of the thrush, the twitter of the chaffinch, or the distant stroke of the woodman, lending silence a charm. She had become familiar with his deformity, and as it grew less singular to her eyes, his voice became sweeter to her ears. Their conversation turned on many things—there was wisdom in his words, and she listened to him as a pupil to a preceptor. His feelings deepened with their interviews, his hopes brightened, and felicity seemed dawning before him. As hope kindled, he acquired confidence. They were walking together, he had pointed out the beauties and explained the properties of the wild-flowers on their path, he had dwelt on the virtues of the humblest weed, when he stopped short, and gazing in her face—"Maria!" he added, "I have loved these flowers—I have cherished these simple weeds, because they shunned me not—they shrank not from me, as did the creatures of the human race—they spread their beauties before me—they denied me not their sweetness. You only have I met with among the children of Adam, who persecuted me not with ridicule, or who insulted not my deformity with the vulgar gaze of curiosity. Who I am I know not—from whence I was brought amongst these hills I cannot tell; I am a thing which the world has laughed at, and of which my parents were ashamed. But my wants have been few. I have gold to purchase flattery, if I desired it—to buy tongues to tell me I am not deformed; but I despise them. My soul partakes not of my body's infirmities—it has sought a spirit to love, that would love it in return. Maria, has it found one?"

Maria was startled—she endeavoured to speak, but her

tongue faltered—tears gathered in her eyes, and her looks bespoke pity and astonishment.

"Fool! fool!" exclaimed the cripple, "I have been deceived! Maria *pities* me!—*only pities me!* Hate me, Maria—despise me as does the world. I can bear hatred—I can endure scorn—I can repel them!—but *pity* consumes me!—and *pity* from you! Fool! fool!" he added, "wherefore dreamed I there was one that would look with love on deformed Ebenezer? Farewell, Maria! farewell!—remember, but do not pity me!" and he hurried from her side.

She would have detained him—she would have told him that she reverenced him—that she esteemed him; but he hastened away, and she felt also that she *pitied* him—and *love* and *pity* can never dwell in the same breast for the same object. Maria stood and wept.

Ebenezer returned to his cottage; but the hope which he had cherished, the dream which he had fed, died reluctantly. He accused himself for acting precipitately—he believed he had taken the tear of affection for pity. His heart was at war with itself. Day after day he revisited the mountain-side, and the path in the wood where they had met; but Maria wandered there no longer. His feelings, his impatience, his incertitude, rose superior to the ridicule of man; he resolved to visit the mansion of his neighbour, where Maria and her friends were residing. The dinner-bell was ringing as he approached the house; but he knew little of the etiquette of the world, and respected not its forms. The owner of the mansion welcomed him with the right hand of cordiality, for his discourse in the cottage had charmed him; others expressed welcome, for some who before had mocked now respected him; and Maria took his hand with a look of joy and her wonted sweetness. The heart of Ebenezer felt assured. Francis Dorrington alone frowned, and rose not to welcome him.

The dinner-bell again rang; the Lady Helen had not

arrived, and dinner was delayed for her, but she came not. They proceeded to the dining-room. Ebenezer offered his arm to Maria, and she accepted it. Francis Dorrington muttered angry words between his teeth. The dinner passed—the dessert was placed upon the table—Lady Helen entered the room—she prayed to be excused for her delay—her host rose to introduce her to Ebenezer.

"Ebenezer!—the deformed!" she exclaimed, in a tone of terror, and, dashing her hands before her eyes, as he rose before her, she fell back in hysterics.

"Turn the monster from the house!" cried Francis Dorrington, springing forward; "my mother cannot endure the sight of such."

"Whom call ye monster, young man?" said Ebenezer, angrily.

"You, wretch!" replied Dorrington, raising his hand, and striking the cripple to the floor.

"Shame! shame!" exclaimed the company.

"Coward!" cried Maria, starting from her seat.

The cripple, with a rapidity that seemed impossible, sprang to his feet—he gasped, he trembled, every joint shook, rage boiled in his veins—he glanced at his insulter, who attempted to repeat the blow—he uttered a yell of vengeance, he clutched a dessert-knife from the table, and within a moment it was plunged in the body of the man who had injured him.

A scream of horror burst from the company. Ebenezer, with the reeking knife in his grasp, stood trembling from rage, not from remorse. But he offered not to repeat the blow. A half-consciousness of what he had done seemed to stay his hand. The sudden scream of the party aroused the Lady Helen from her real or affected fit. She beheld her son bleeding on the floor—she saw the vengeful knife in the hands of the cripple. She screamed more wildly than before—she wrung her hands!

"Monster!—murderer!" she exclaimed, "he has slain—*he has slain his brother!*"

"*My brother!*" shouted Ebenezer, still grasping the knife in his hand. "Woman—woman! mother—mother!—who am I? Answer me—who are you?" and he sprang forward, and held her by the arm. "Tell me," he continued, "what mean ye—what mean ye? My *brother*—do ye say my *brother?* Art thou my *mother?* Have I a *mother?* Speak—speak!" and he grasped her arm more fiercely.

"Monster!" she repeated, "offspring of my shame!—away—away! *He is thy brother!* I have shunned thee, wretch, I have disowned thee; but thou hast carried murder to my bosom!" and, tearing her arm from his grasp, she threw it round the neck of her wounded son.

The company gazed upon each other. Ebenezer stood for a moment, his eyes rolling, his teeth rattling together, the knife shaking in his hand. He uttered a wild cry of agony—he tore the garments from his breast, as though it were ready to burst, and, with the look and the howl of a maniac, he sprang to the door, and disappeared. Some from an interest in his fate, others from a desire to secure him, followed after him. But he fled to the woods, and they traced him not.

It was found that the wound of Francis Dorrington was not mortal; and the fears of the company were directed from him to Ebenezer, who they feared had laid violent hands upon his own life.

On the following day, without again meeting the company, Lady Helen left the house, having acknowledged the deformed Ebenezer to be her son—a child of shame—whose birth had been concealed from the world.

On the third day, the poor cripple was found by a shepherd wandering on the hills. His head was uncovered; his garments and his body were torn by the brambles through which he had rushed; his eyes rolled wildly, and, when ac-

costed, he fled, exclaiming, "I am Cain! I am Cain! I have slain my brother! Touch me not—the mark is on my forehead!" He was secured, and taken to a place of safety.

The circumstances twined round Maria's heart; she heard no more of Ebenezer the cripple, but she forgot him not. Several years passed, and she, together with a friend, visited a lunatic asylum in a distant part of the country, in which a female acquaintance, once the admired of society, had become an inmate. They were shown round the different wards; some of the inmates seemed happy, others melancholy, but all were mild—all shrank from the eye of their keeper. The sound of the clanking chains around their ankles filled Maria's soul with horror, and she longed to depart; but the keeper invited them to visit the garden of his asylum. They entered, and beheld several quiet-looking people engaged in digging; others were pruning trees; and some sat upon benches on the paths, playing with their fingers, striking their heels upon the ground, or reading stray leaves of an old book or a newspaper. Each seemed engaged with himself, none conversed with his neighbour. Upon a bench near the entrance to a small arbour or summer-house sat a female, conning an old ballad; and, as she perused it, she laughed, wept, and sang by turns. Maria stopped to converse with her, and her friend entered the arbour. In it sat a grey-headed and deformed man; he held a volume of Savage in his hand, which had then been but a short time published.

"I am reading the 'Bastard,' by Savage," said he, as the stranger entered; "he is my favourite author. His fate was mine—he describes my feelings. He had an unnatural mother—so had I. He was disowned—so was I. He slew a man, and so did I; but I my brother."

The voice, the words, fell upon Maria's ear. She became pale, she glanced towards the arbour, she cast an inquiring look upon the keeper.

"Fear not, ma'am," he replied; "he is an innocent creature. He does not rave now; and but that there is an occasional wildness in his language, he is as well as you are. Enter and converse with him, ma'am; he is a great speaker, and to much purpose, too, as visiters tell me."

She entered the arbour. The cripple's eyes met hers—he threw down the book.

"Maria—Maria!" he exclaimed, "this is kind! this is kind, indeed! But do not *pity* me—do not *pity me again!* Hate me, Maria! you saw me slay my brother!"

She informed him that his brother was not dead—that he had recovered within a few weeks.

"Not dead!" replied the cripple. "Thank Heaven! Ebenezer is not a murderer! But I am well now—the fever of my brain is passed. Go, Maria, do this for me—it is all I now ask—inquire why I am here immured, and by whose authority. Suffer not my reason to be buried in reason's tomb, and crushed among its wrecks. Your smile, your words of kindness, your tears of gratitude, caused me to dream once, and its remembrance is still as a speck of light amidst the darkness of my bosom; but these grey hairs have broken the dream." And Ebenezer bent his head upon his breast, and sighed.

Maria and her friend left the asylum, but in a few weeks they returned, and when they again departed, Ebenezer Baird went with them. He now sought not Maria's love, but he was gratified with her esteem, and that of her friends. He outlived the persecution of his kindred and the derision of the world; and in the forty-sixth year of his age he died in peace, and bequeathed his property to Maria Bradbury—the first of the human race that had looked on him with kindness, or cheered him with a smile.

THE LEGEND OF FAIR HELEN OF KIRCONNEL.

The seat of a branch of the Dumfries-shire Maxwells—Kirconnel—a property lying not far distant from Dumfries, and surrounded by the little pastoral stream, Kirtle—is one of the most beautiful that ever gratified the taste or inspired the pride of a high family. It was not until about the beginning of the seventeenth century that it came into the possession of the Maxwells; for, during a long period, it belonged to the old, though never illustrious, family of the Bells, who, amidst all the turmoil and strife of the March territories, had the good sense to prefer the quiet pleasures of the retreats of their own pure Kirtle, to the tumultuous and cruel scenes which boasted no streamlet but the heart's blood of contending foes. The power of Lord Maxwell, or the threat of Douglas, were equally unavailing to force the old proprietor of Kirconnel—though he ranked as a lesser baron, and might command retainers to fight for his plea—to sacrifice the pleasures of domestic peace on the altars of Laverna or Bellona: these conjunct goddesses who, hand in hand, swayed the destinies of Border men, and regulated the Border rights of mine and thine. He held his fine property directly of the crown; and, so long as he fulfilled the conditions of his right, he conceived himself entitled to the enjoyment of what had been fairly got and honourably retained. One strong element in Kirconnel's determination to live at home, in the enjoyment of what home may produce to a mind capable of appreciating its sweets, was the fear of interrupting the happiness of his lady—one of the family of Irvings in that quarter, who latterly came to possess his property—and of one child, a daughter, the Maid of

Kirconnel, concerning whom, as all our readers know, more has been said and sung by antiquarian minstrel than ever fell to the hapless fame or treasured memory of fair woman. Ah, we need scarcely say, that this young heiress of Kirconnel's name was Helen; for who that has read the touching lines of Pinkerton can ever forget the appellation of one whose fate has drawn more tears than ever did that of the heroine Lady Margaret, in the old ballad of "Douglas' Tragedy?" The disasters of ordinary women, though hallowed by the sanctifying power of love, have seldom in this country inspired the harp of the minstrel; so far we are forced to admit the power of beauty, abstracted from the qualities of the mind and heart, that it has been a talisman to bardic genius in every age; yet it is honourable to the character of our nation, that the soul which illumines the "face divine" has called forth strains as melting and triumphant as ever resulted from the effects of physical beauty. It is, however, when the two qualities have been found combined in a favoured daughter of Scotland, that an unhappy fate has called forth a sympathy which has left no harp to sound fitfully in the willow-tree, no heart in our true land untouched, no eye destitute of sympathetic tears. Such has truly been the effect produced by the fortune of Helen of Kirconnel—a fortune which came up on the revolving wheel of the mutable goddess, notwithstanding all the efforts of her father to make the course of her life happy, and its termination blessed. Abstracted as the thoughts were of the three inhabitants of Kirconnel—the lady, the laird, and the daughter—from the scenes that were ever changing in the warlike world around them, so much greater was the necessity for cultivating the opportunities of enjoyment that nature and fortune had awarded to them; and so much greater also was the relish for that enjoyment which has ever been found in minds and hearts properly constituted and tuned to the harp of goodness, to increase with posses-

sion as much as the false taste for stimulating avocations cloys with the easy surfeit. It is not often, even in our virtuous land, and even in these days when the blessings of a high civilisation have inclined mankind to the cultivation of the social affections, that a family is found with its different members so predisposed for the harmony of exclusively domestic joys, that some chord does not occasionally give forth a discordant sound when touched by an external impulse; but, in the times of which we speak, and in the district where the individuals resided, "the happy family" was a group that was more often found in the lyrics of the poet or the creations of hope deferred than in the real existences of the troubled and vexed world.

The house of Kirconnel stood on "fair Kirconnel Lee;" a term implying that the wood, which in those days encompassed every baronial residence, had been, to a certain extent, cleared away, to allow the daisy-covered lawn to rejoice in the beams of the generally excluded sun. But, at a little distance, the empire of the forest was again resumed, on the condition exacted by nature, of allowing the winding Kirtle to enjoy her grassy bank, covered with the wild rose and the eglantine; and to roll playfully along her pebbly bed, unimpeded by the neighbouring trees, which, as if in amatory dalliance, sent down their straggling lips to kiss her as she went. The wood bower—in early times a species of rural retreat in much greater fashion than now-a-days—was, in repetition of itself, seen rearing its ornamented walls, round which the native parasite plants were entwined in close embrace in various parts of the shady retreat. Some of these had been carefully looked to by the lady of Kirconnel herself, who, anxious to confirm her husband's resolution against engaging in the wars of the times, left no energy unemployed to render their residence, not only within the walls of the house, but in the bowers and gardens, as pleasant to the eye as the fruits of her heart and mind were delightful to the

rational and loving soul of her appreciating and grateful lord. As Sir Owain says:—

> "Fair were her erbers with flowers—
> Rose and lili divers colours,
> Primrol and parvink;
> Mint, feverfoy, and eglantine,
> Colimbin, and mo there were,
> Than ani man mocht think."

True; the Graces had, as yet, but small influence in Scotland; but the Genius of Chivalry, a cognate spirit, was busy in effecting a great revolution in the minds of the inhabitants; and though there was little to humanise, there was much to elevate and beautify. Traces of this power might already be seen about the bowers and shades of Kirconnel, where some rude figures of knights in various positions—one rescuing a damsel from her enemies—one in the combat at outrance—one striking the palisades of an armed city—placed, as they were, in the retreats of peace and domestic happiness by a former warlike possessor of the property, served the purpose of ornamenting the sequestered walks, and supplying to the peaceful and happy inhabitants a contrast between the pursuits of war and the pleasures of home, and home's blessed enjoyments.

At a little distance from the mansion or castle—for every house, in those days, had a castellated character—was, and still is, the burying-ground of Kirconnel; a spot which, from the peculiarity of its situation, as well as from its own mournful associations, impressed the mind of the visiter with feelings which startled him, as much from their novelty as from their intensity. There is a small stone there, that would, if deciphered and communicated to our readers, anticipate our story, and claim the ready tear before our own sympathies are relieved by our recital. We pass it by at present, to give some idea of the extraordinary spot where it lies. This ground of the dead, or "Death's Mailing," as

it has sometimes been called, is invested with all the *charms* of a sublimed melancholy, which contemplates nature as a whole, and looks to those high purposes of her great author in visiting poor mortals with their heart-chastening woes. At the time of which we speak, this place of the dead was entirely surrounded with high oaks and spreading elms, except where the silvery Kirtle embraced the hallowed spot, as she rolled slowly along—more slowly, it might almost appear, at this spot than elsewhere—and murmured a soft threnody in the ears of the guardian spirits, that there tended the clay forms which they once animated. A few very rude stones, whose rudeness was their greatest recommendation to the sentimental mind, told, in the quaint "old Inglis" of that day, their simple tale. "Here lyethe the race of ye sons of Kirconnelle," might have been seen on a rude freestone that has long since disappeared. "Terraughtie did choose to lie her," appeared upon another old relic; and some exhibited more simple tokens—still pointing out nothing more than name and surname, yet more eloquent in that brevity than the most "storied urn." "Jon Kirkpatrycke," "Andrew Welles," "Heln Johnston," "Mary of the Le'," without one word more to say what they were, where they lived, when they visited this scene of sorrow, and when they departed from it, possessed an eloquence in their simple brevity that moved the heart of the visiter with a power now little felt and less appreciated. The swelling green tumuli, with these simple-speaking, grey-headed stones, standing, yet leaning to a side, as if themselves bent by the hands of time, how humbly might they appear, encircled as they were, with the proud monarch of the wood, the primeval oak, that had seen the sires and grandsires of the lowly inhabitants of "Death's Mailing" rise and fall; and become dust, as man contemplates the day-fly wing forth in the morning, live out its day, and die. Such was the romantic burying-place of Kirconnel at the time of which we speak;

and even now, when the oak has fallen before the axe of civilisation, and Fame's trump has sounded even over the tomb, the place has a hallowed and romantic character (the Kirtle is still there) not exhibited by other burying-grounds in Scotland.

In those retreats, the members of the family of Kirconnel passed the greater part of their time. Helen, though a lover of home, was fond of gratifying a fancy pregnant of beautiful images, and a taste for what is lovely in nature, by sitting by the banks of the Kirtle, and supplying her mind with the pabulum of the old Scottish romances. "Raf Coilyear and his Cross-bow," and "Gilbert with the White Hand," though soon superseded by the continental romances, were then the legitimate fountains of amusement to the fair maids of Scotland; and those who aimed at sublimer flights, might have had recourse to "Fyn Maccowl," or "Gret Gow Macmorne;" but there was in none of the works as yet circulated in Scotland, what might gratify the intense yearnings of the female heart for those poetical images which subsequently sprang up with the more mature growth of chivalry. The loves of warriors are not the loves of everyday life, far less the loves of the inspired poet; and Helen, as she read these old legendary romances, might find in them the amusement that afforded a relaxing alternative to her own poetical communings with the oldest bard of all—Nature; but for the inspiration of love itself she required the talisman—man—in that high aspect she had prefigured of the noblest of God's creatures, to rouse her heart from nature to the lover's dream.

As yet the Maid of Kirconnel had not seen any one that realised the idea she had formed, by the banks of the Kirtle, of the individual who could call up in her young bosom those extraordinary emotions which constitute "love's young dream." The secluded mode of life adopted by her parents was unfavourable to a choice of the talismanic ob-

jects; and it even appeared to be her father and mother's wish that such choice should be excluded, that her heart might, in the absence of many forms, learn to be pleased with the man whom their love or policy might point out to her adoption. A second cousin of her own, Walter Bell of Blacket House, had a free passport to the hall of Kirconnel, as well as to the bowers that were enshrined in Kirconnel woods. The laird saw in the young man his nearest heir, in the event of his Helen being taken from him by fate; and the lady could detect, as she thought, in Bell's quiet and sombre manner, some assimilation to her own love of retirement and ease, and a consequent disrelish of the warlike and sanguinary customs of the times. Yet it was known that the young laird of Blacket House had been engaged in secret frays between the Johnstones and Crightons; while, for some purpose not generally known, though, from what we have said, not difficult to be surmised, he had fought in disguise, and disclaimed the glory of having hewn off the heads of many Johnstones, whose deaths might have brought him renown, if not wealth. He had fought from a spirit of animosity and a thirst of blood, that lay deep buried in his heart, but which, along with its noisome fruits, he had striven to conceal, from the knowledge he possessed of the pacific disposition of his friends the Kirconnels, whose good-will he had a motive to cultivate more powerful than that of wealth or glory. He wished to recommend himself to the fair Helen, by acquiring the love and esteem of her father and mother; and he doubted not that, by his own personal accomplishments—neither few nor unimportant—aided by the advice or power of parental love and authority, he would succeed in changing in her the old habitual feelings of ordinary friendship into the higher and purer sentiments of affection.

And sure it was that no one who ever aimed to acquire a "ladye's love," made his attempt with more advantages

on his side than Walter Bell of Blacket House. The gay lover in the old romance, who cried that, with the advantage of making love in a wood, and by the side of a silver stream, he would gain the heart of the fairest woman of Christendom, though his face were as black as the coal slave's, and his lineage no better than the knave-child's, spoke more of human nature than he himself perhaps knew. But he spoke of women in the aggregate; and it is not unlikely that such a woman as fair Helen of Kirconnel had never come under the trial of his skill. The truth of the statement fell to be tested by one who, besides the advantages stated by the gay knight, could boast the consent of a father, old friendship, and a face and a lineage against which no exception could be taken by the admirers of graces and genealogy. Bell was aware of the advantages he possessed; but he could calculate the strength of these better than he could fathom the mysteries of woman's heart. Although the greater part of his time was passed at Kirconnel, where he took every opportunity of threading the mazes of the oak woods, or sitting by the side of the Kirtle, with the object of his affections, it is doubtful if he ever ascertained, by the passing indications she exhibited, that her thoughts and feelings were pitched much beyond the grade of those which nature had awarded to himself. She saw and felt beauties in the scenery of Kirconnel, which to her lover were but as the "sear leaf." Every object in nature—from the planet to the plant, from the shining levin of heaven to the phosphoric beam on the margin of the Kirtle—had some intelligence for her inquiring eye. Every power in operation around her—from the general sympathy of nature's highest elements, to the loves of the little forest birds that sung their love-song in her bower—had some charm to elevate her thoughts and sublime her sentiments. She, therefore, who could search for intelligence where others saw nothing but inert matter, or,

at least, the uninteresting indications of everyday nature, might probably have been an unfortunate object on whom our said romantic knight might try the effect of his extraneous charms of wood and water. Nor was she at all fitted for being acted upon by the love intrigues of her cousin of Blacket House, who, coming far short of a knowledge of the elevated sentiments by which she was inspired, could neither yield her that sympathy which she required as a *sine qua non* of affection, nor stand the investigation of the shrewd wisdom or the high philosophy of the heart of an elevated woman. While he simply sued and used the ordinary words of love, she analysed, and found that, where she never could be understood, she never could dispose of her affections.

The mind of Helen had long been made up on the question of her cousin's suit. It had begun early; and the innumerable walks he had enjoyed with her along the banks of the Kirtle had afforded him a thousand opportunities of declaring his feelings. By the natural tact of women, she had always contrived to evade the question, and contented herself, even in the midst of extravagant declarations, with negative indications of her inability to return his passion. These he understood not; and, unfortunately, he acted upon the principle that has driven many a fond lover to despair—that the mistress who appears to listen without displeasure is presumed to give a tacit consent. They know little of the heart of woman who trust their happiness or their lives to the frail bark of such a fond and dangerous delusion. A woman will seldom put an end to the adulation that supports her pride; but the Maid of Kirconnel, who had no pride to gratify, acted as many a single-hearted female has done and will do, who receives without a frown that her nature detests, but without a satisfaction that her honesty will not allow her to assume, the fond speeches of an old friend, couched in terms of an admiration which is only her

due. The native sensibility of her soul shrank at the thought of first construing harshly her relative's professions of affection, and then telling him that he was not the individual who was qualified to win her heart. Yet, in justice to her, it requires to be stated, that she often communed with herself, in her solitary walks, on the necessity of checking her cousin's fond and unfortunate delusion, lest evil might come out of gentleness so nearly allied to good.

This unfortunate connection between Blacket House and his fair cousin, fated as it was to continue, assumed daily a more critical aspect. The young man, overwhelmed by a passion that was daily and hourly fed by the contemplation of a beauty and qualities seldom before witnessed in a Scottish maiden, was not only intoxicated by the violence of his love, but satisfied that his cousin, in return, loved him with an affection only more chastely expressed, though, of course, not less powerful than his own. Her parents, too, who had lent a fond and willing ear to his statements of their daughter's love for him, had made up their minds upon a point which presented all the appearances of being sealed and settled by her who had the greatest interest in its truth. She was always to be found by him in her solitary walks among Kircconnel woods. Their meetings were favoured by their parents; their walks were uninterrupted; the current of his passion flowed without check, and his expressions only varied in becoming more animated. The absence of a *harsh denial* filled the measure of a deluding, blending hope; and while the courses of their two minds were in directions entirely opposite—his along the rose-strewed valley of a requited affection; hers in a channel that led to objects too brilliant for his dull eye to scan, and too sublime for his unfledged fancy to reach—he conceived that a mutual sympathy of congenial feeling animated both their hearts.

It was at this extraordinary state of the domestic affairs of Kirconnel that an extraneous cause gave a new current to the feelings of the young maiden, without having the effect of changing that of her lover, or of opening the eyes of her father and mother to the true fact, that she could not love the man they intended as her husband. A gallant, high-spirited youth, one of the Flemings of Kirkpatrick, had followed a doe up to within a very short space of Kirconnel House. The timid creature had taken to the water, and, springing on the opposite bank, fled past a bower in which Helen was at the time sitting reading "Sir Tristam," then in the hands of every young lady in Scotland and England. She started as the creature shot past her, and, putting her head timidly forward, to get a better view of the fleet inhabitant of the forest, saw before her, with cap in hand, bowing, in knightly guise, Adam Fleming of Kirkpatrick. Neither of the two had before seen the other; but the fame of the one's noble mien, high mind, and martial virtues, and of the other's incomparable beauty and elevation of sentiment, had reached reciprocally their willing ears.

"That a Fleming of Kirkpatrick," said the youth, still bowing humbly, and smiling, "should have had the boldness to interpose the image of his worthless person between the fancy and the heaven of the meditations of fair Helen of Kirconnel, doth, by my sword, require an apology. Shall I be still bolder in asking a pardon?"

The effect produced on Helen's mind by the noble figure of the youth, and the romantic and playful turn he had given to his intrusion, was quick and heartfelt. It was, besides, simultaneous with the memory of his spread fame; and in an instant her face was in a glow of mixed shame and confusion, the causes of which, perhaps, lay deeper than the influence of a mere feeling of surprise or interruption.

"You have my full forgiveness, sir," she replied, while her face glowed deeper, in spite of her efforts to appear unaffected.

Her soft musical voice fell on the ear of the youth; but his keen, dark eye was busy with the examination of charms with which his ear had been long familiar. The blush of a woman is a man's triumph; whatever may be its secret cause, the man will construe it favourably to himself, in the face of a denial of his power; and so far at least he has the right, that nature herself evidences in his favour, by an acknowledgment that he has touched the fountains of the heart. Fleming was not different from other men; and, though he might have been wrong in his construction of the secret moving impulse which called up the mantling adornment of beauty that was almost beyond the power of increase, he felt the full influence of the effect he thought he had produced, and, conceiving himself favourably received, laid in his heart the germs of an affection that was to govern his destiny. The forms of breeding, more punctilious in those days of chivalry than even now, forbade farther communication at that time, and, bowing gracefully as he drank up the rays of her blushing beauty, he bounded away after his dogs, that had kept their course in pursuit of the flying doe.

This was the first time that ever Helen had seen a stranger huntsman cross Kirconnel Lee in pursuit of his game; but it was soon to appear that roes and does, when pursued by the gallant Fleming, seemed to think that in the recesses of Kirconnel they might find that safety which was denied them in other coverts; at least it became certain that more of that kind of game fled before the hunter over Kirconnel Lee, after the meeting we have described, than ever were seen before by man or maiden. Meanwhile the image of the noble youth, with his clear, intelligent eye, his rising and expanded forehead, from which his

black hair was shaded to a side, and mixed with the long flowing locks that reached down to his shoulders; his intellectual expression of countenance, where beauty sat enshrined among the virtues, his breeding, his modesty, his voice and general bearing—were all busy with the fancy of the Maid of Kirconnel. Nature's talisman had been applied, and the charm had wrought in its highest and most mysterious power. Nor less had been the effect of that first meeting on the mind of the youthful heir of Kirkpatrick. They loved; and the does which afterwards brushed over Kirconnel Lee were only the scouts of the hunting lover, who, while he could not help the choice of the flying wilding in taking that direction, could not, of a consequence, avoid a repeated *intrusion* on the wood-bower privacy of her who longed to see him with a heart that palpitated at his coming as strongly as did that of the flying deer. The rules of breeding direct all their force against a first interview; against a second, though brought about in the same way as the first, they have no efficacy; and love, which defies the whole code, soon reconciled differences which he despised. A few meetings revealed to each other the fact—which, somehow or other, is discovered by nobody but lovers—that one person has been intended from the beginning of the world to be formed for another. The heir of Kirkpatrick and the Maid of Kirconnel exhibited to each other such a similarity of thought, feeling, and sentiment, that love seemed to have nothing more to do than to tie those threads which nature had not only spun, but hung forth with a predisposed reciprocity of communication. The discovery that their thoughts had taken the same range, and reached an equal altitude of elevation, carried with it that pleasant surprise that is always favourable to the progress of the tender passion; and the delight of a new-born sympathy in sentiments that had long gratified only the heart in which they were conceived, but

which now were seen glowing in the eyes of another, was only another form of that passion itself.

Though Helen had seen many indications that might have satisfied her (if her mind had been directed to the subject) that her father and mother were bent upon a match between her cousin of Blacket House and her, she had never, either from a want of courage or steady serious thought on the subject, put it to herself what was her precise predicament or condition, on the supposition of such circumstance being in itself true and irremediable. She had hitherto had no great need for secresy, because she did not love another; and her father, mother, and lover, having taken it for granted that she was favourable to her cousin's suit, nothing of a definite nature had ever transpired to call for a demonstration on her part, as an alternative of dishonesty and double-dealing. Her situation was now changed. She now loved, and loved ardently, another; and the necessity she felt of meeting the heir of Kirkpatrick in secret, brought out in full relief her inmost sense of what were the views and purposes of her father and mother, and all the responsibility of her negative conduct, as regarded the suit of him she could never love. But, strange as it may seem, if she felt a difficulty in correcting her cousin and disobeying her parents before the accession of her love, she felt that difficulty rise to an impossibility after that important event of her life. She trembled at the thought of her love being crossed: one word of her rejection of the suit of her cousin would reach the ears of her parents; dissension would be thrown into the temple of peace; her love would be discovered; her lover, a man famous in arms, and an aider of the Johnstones, the opponents of Blacket House, traced, rejected, and banished; and her heart finally torn and broken by the antagonist powers of love and duty. She felt her own weakness, and trembled at it, without coming to a resolution to make a

disclosure; while her overwhelming love carried her, on the moonlight nights, over Kirconnel Lee, to meet her faithful Heir of Kirkpatrick in the romantic burying-ground already described. This extraordinary place was that fixed upon by the lovers for their night meetings; for in any other part of the domains of Kirconnel they could not have escaped the eye of Blacket House; who, though he had no suspicion of a rival, was so often in search of the object of his engrossing passion, that she seldom went out without being observed by the ever-waking and vigilant surveillance of love.

Many times already had Helen waited till her unconscious parents retired to the rest of the aged, and the moon threw her sheet of silver over Kirconnel Lee, and, wrapped up in a night-cloak, slipped out at the wicker-gate of the west enclosure, to seek, under the shades of the oaks, Death's Mailing, the appointed trysting-place of the ardent lovers. Again she was to see her beloved Heir of Kirkpatrick, and at last she had resolved to break to him the painful position in which she was placed by the still existing belief of her parents and Blacket House, that she was to be his wedded wife. On this occasion, she sat wistfully looking out at her chamber window. Her father and mother had retired to their couch. Everything was quiet, the wind stilled, and the mighty oaks whispered not the faintest sigh to disturb the sensitive ear of night. The moon was already up, and she was on the eve of wrapping her cloak round her, and creeping forth into the forest shade, when she observed the long shadow of a man extending many yards upon the shining grass of the green lee. The figure of the individual she could not see; for a projection of the building, sufficient to conceal him, but not to prevent his shadow from being revealed, interrupted her vision. She hesitated and trembled. If the shadow had moved and disappeared, she could have accounted for it, by supposing

that some of the domestics had not yet retired to bed; but why should a man stand alone and stationary at that hour, in that place, in that position? Her fears ran all upon Blacket House, who was never happy but when in her presence or near her person; and who had been, on a former occasion, reported by the servants to have lain and slept under her window for an entire night, and never left his position till the morning sun exposed the doting lover to the wondering eyes of the domestics, who had never yet felt a love that kept them awake for more than a dreamy hour at cockcrow. As she gazed and hesitated, her hour was passing, and her lover would be among the grave-stones, waiting for her. Her anxiety grew intense; she feared to go, but shook at the thoughts of disappointing *him;* never dreaming (so whispered love) of herself. The figure still stood as stationary as a grave-stone, while her soul was agitated like the restless spirit that hovers over it, sighing for the hour of departure to the regions of ether. She could bear no longer; the projection which concealed him would conceal her; she plied the furtive steps of love; and crossing, like a fairy on the moonlit green knowe, the rising lawn, was forth among the towering oaks in as little time as the shadow of a passing cloud would have taken to trail its dingy traces over the shining lee.

In a short time she arrived at the churchyard, and saw, through the interstices of the surrounding trees, the Heir of Kirkpatrick sitting on a green tumulus, the grave of one who had perhaps loved as they now loved, waiting for her who was beyond the trysting-hour. In a moment longer she was in his arms, and the stillness of the dead was invaded by the stifled sighs, the burning whispers, the rustling pressure of ardent, impatient lovers. The rising graves, and the mossy tomb-stones, and the white scattered bones that had escaped the sexton's eye, and glittered in the moonbeams, were equally neglected and overlooked; and no fear of fairy, ghost,

or gnome, or gowl, entered where Love left no room but for his own engrossing sacrifices. The simple monument of love of "Mary of the Le'," that rose by their side, had often brought the tears to Helen's eyes; but Mary of the Lee was now forgotten. "There is a time and a place for all things" but love, whose rule is general over the flowery lee and the green grave, the mid-day hour and the dreary key-stone of night's black arch.

"What kept ye, sweet Helen, love?" whispered Kirkpatrick in her ear, as she lay entranced in love's dream on his bosom.

"By that question, good Adam," answered she, according to the mode of familiar address of her day, "there hangs a secret that oppresses your Helen, and drinks up all the joys of our affection."

"Speak it forth, my gentle Helen," said Fleming. "What is it? The secresy of our meeting? I have been meditating a resolution to address your father, and this will confirm me. He can have no objections to my suit, save that I am a friend of the Johnstones, and an open warrior; while your cousin, whom you rejected before you saw me, is a concealed mosstrooper, and a secret manslayer."

"There, there," muttered Helen, with trembling emotion —"there, Adam, you have hit the bleeding part of my heart. I did not say to you that I had rejected Blacket House before I saw you; but you were entitled to make that supposition, because I told you that I never received his love; but, alas! Adam, there is a distinction there; and, small as it may seem, its effects may be great upon the fortunes and happiness of your Helen. It is true I have never received his love; but it is equally true that his love, having overgrown the thought of a possibility of rejection, has overlooked my negative indications, and put down my silence for consent. Yes, Adam, yes—even now Blacket House thinks I love him; and, oh! the full responsibility of my apathy rises

before me like a threatening giant; my father and my mother have, I fear, taken for granted that I am to become the wedded wife of my cousin."

"Helen, this does indeed surprise me," replied Kirkpatrick, thoughtfully and sorrowfully. "I thought I had a sufficient objection to overcome on the part of your father, when I had to conquer the prejudices of clanship, and soothe his fears of my ardent spirit for the foray. But this changes all, and my difficulties are increased from the height of Kirconnel Lee to the towering Criffel." And he sat silent for a time, and mused thoughtfully. "But why, my love," he continued, "have you allowed this dangerous delusion to rest so long undisturbed, till it has become a conviction that may only be removed with danger to us all?"

"Ask me not, Adam," replied she, with a full heart, "what I cannot explain. While the tongue of Blacket House's friendship was changing to love, I, whose thoughts were otherwise directed, perceived not the change; and when the truth appeared to me, my love for my father and mother, against the placid stream of whose life I have ever trembled to throw the smallest pebble of a daughter's disobedience, prevented me, day by day, from making the avowal that I could not love their choice. The difficulty increased with the hour; and, ah! my love for you crowned it at last with impossibility."

"That should rather have removed the difficulty," answered he. "Explain, sweet Helen. You are dealing in shadowy parables."

"Think you so, Adam?" said she, sighing. "Ah, then, is man's love different from woman's? The one can look an obstacle in the face; the other turns from it with terror, and flees. See you not that, by telling my parents I could not love my cousin, I would have been conjuring up a bad angel to cross, with his black wing, the secret but sweet path of our affection. The very possibility of being

separated from you—too dear, Adam, as you are to this beating heart—made me tremble at the articulation of that charmed word which contains all my happiness on earth. You have stolen my heart from my father and mother, my sweet woods and bowers, my bright moon and Kirtle; and think you what it would be for me to lose him in whom all is centred!"

"Ah! Helen, Helen, this is unlike the majesty of that mind that roved the blue fields of the heavens, and searched the hidden springs of the love that reigns through all created things. That such thoughts should be allied to that weakness which increases inevitable danger by flying from it, I could not have supposed to be exemplified by my Maid of Kirconnel. Yet is that trembling fear not a greater proof of my Helen's love than an outspoken rejection of twenty rival suitors? It is—I feel it is; and who will chide a fault of earth that hangs by a virtue of heaven? Dear, devoted, cherished object of my first passion, what has the simple heir of Kirkpatrick to give in exchange for the devotion of such a being?"

And the impassioned youth pressed her closer and closer to his breast, while he spread over her shoulders the falling cloak, to shield her from the autumn dews.

They sat for some time silent—the difficulty of their situation being for a brief period forgotten and lost in the tumult of the rising feelings of a strong mutual passion.

"But this must not be allowed to continue," again said Kirkpatrick. "It is *necessary*, Helen, that you do this duty to yourself, to your cousin, your parents, and to me. Call up the necessary fortitude, my love. Tell your mother that you cannot love Blacket House. I know the pain it will produce to you and to them; but, alas! there are many positions in this world where we can only get to the object of our desires through painful means. Pain is, indeed, the price of most of our pleasures; and, when we do not pay

that price, we become bankrupt in our best feelings, and die wretched. When the path is free, I shall come forward and claim my Helen in the face of the world. Will you, will you, love?"

And he bent his head, and repeated the question in soft tones beneath the cloak that covered her head; while she, in muffled accents, replied—

"I will, I will, Adam, though I should die with the last word of the declaration.'

A heavy groan at this moment fell upon their ear. Adam started hastily up; and Helen, roused from her love's dream, stood petrified with fear. They looked around them in every direction; but the proximity of the place where they had been sitting to the edge of the wood, rendered it easy for an intruder to overhear their discourse, and to escape among the trees in an instant. Helen's fears again fell on Blacket House, and she whispered to Adam what she had observed previous to her leaving the house. He conceived them to be well founded; and, as the thought of the man who could kill his enemies in disguise, and deny the deed, flashed upon his mind, he felt for his sword, and then smiled at the precipitude of his defensive precaution. It was necessary, however, that Helen should now hurry home; and, surmounting the turf-dyke of the burying-ground, they, with rapid steps, made for Kirconnel House, at a little distance from which they parted, with a close embrace. Helen stood for a moment, and looked after her lover; then, wrapping her cloak about her head, she moved quickly round the edge of the enclosed lawn, and was on the eve of running forward to the wicket, when Blacket House stood before her. He looked for a moment sternly at her, spoke not a word, and then dashed away into the wood. Terrified still more, Helen hurried away, and got into the house and her own chamber before the full extent of her danger opened, with all its probable consequences, upon her mind. Hav-

ing undressed herself, she retired to her couch, and meditated on the extraordinary position in which she was now placed. She had now been discovered by her cousin, who, no doubt, knew well that she had that night had a secret meeting with Kirkpatrick—a partisan of his antagonists, the Johnstones. The discovery of a rival had come on him with the discovery of a delusion under which he had sighed, and dreamed, and hoped for years. It was probable, nay, certain, then, that the communication she intended to make to her father and mother, that she could not love Blacket House, would be received along with the elucidating commentary, that the lover now despised had discovered her love intercourse with the heir of Kirkpatrick. She would, therefore, get no credit for her statement that she never loved her cousin; but would be set down as a breaker of pledges, and one who traitorously amused herself with the broken hopes of her unfortunate lovers. Whether she made the communication or not, it would be made by Blacket House, whose fear of losing the object of his affections, or his revenge—whichever of the two moved him—would force him to the immediate disclosure. The serenity of the domestic peace and happiness of Kirconnel House would be clouded for the first time, and that by the disobedience of one who had heretofore been held to contribute, in no small degree, to that which she was to be the means of destroying, perhaps for ever. The contrast between the confidence, the hope, and the affection with which she had been, by her parents, contemplated, and fondly cherished, during all the bygone part of her life, and the new-discovered treachery into which her secret love for a stranger would be construed, was a thought she could scarcely bear. These and a thousand other things passed through her thoughts with a rapidity which did not lessen the burning pain of their impress upon her mind; and the repetition of a thousand reflections, fears, and hopes, produced in the end a

confusion that terrified sleep from her pillow, and consigned her to the powers of anguish for the remainder of the night and morning.

She rose with a burning cheek and a high-fluttering pulse, produced by the fever of mind under which she still laboured. She opened the casement to let in the cool breeze of morning to brace her nerves, and enable her to stand an interview with her father and mother, who might already (for Blacket House was at Kirconnel at all hours) be in possession of the secret of what they conceived to be their once-loved Helen's disobedience and treachery. Her own communication, which she had pledged herself to Kirkpatrick to make, was now invested with treble terrors; and though she knew that her safety and happiness depended upon an open declaration, she felt herself totally unable to make it. Trembling and irresolute, she approached the parlour where her father and mother, along with herself, were in the habit of taking their morning meal. They were there; and there was another there—it was her cousin. He looked at her as she entered, with a calm, but mysterious eye, which fluttered her nerves again, and forced her to stand for a moment in the middle of the apartment, irresolute whether to go forward or retreat. She fearfully threw her eye over the faces of her parents. There was no change there; the ordinary placidity of their wonted manner, and the kindly love-greeting borne in their mellow voices, startled her—so strong had been her conviction that all was disclosed. Her parents were destitute of guile; and an instant's thought satisfied her that they were still in their ignorance of the secret. But Blacket House continued his dark gaze in silence; and even this—a decided alteration in his manner—was unnoticed by the unsuspecting couple, who threw their fond eyes on their loving daughter as their only remaining pride and solace. What meant this? The new turn taken by the stream of her difficulty and danger surprised

and confused her; but, calming by the influence of her parents' kindness, she sat down and went through the forms of the morning meal, without exhibiting a discomposure that might attract the notice of these loving beings, who searched her face only for the indications of health and the beams of her pleasure. Her comparative composure enabled her to collect her ideas; and she thought she now discovered a reason for this seeming forbearance or discretion of Blacket House—a man little formed for these, or any other virtues: he intended to *sell* his knowledge at the price of a hand that never could be his, but by this or some other means of compulsion. The moment this thought—and, under all the circumstances, it was a reasonable one—entered her mind, she trembled at the power of the dark-eyed, silent being who sat there, and gazed upon her in revengeful triumph. For relief, she turned her eyes to her parents; yet she saw there the smile that approved his suit, and the confidence that would believe his declaration. Her own Kirkpatrick was absent; and she dared not meet him to receive the assistance of his advice, to enable her to support herself under her trial, or devise a plan suited to the changed circumstances for her relief. She hurried over her meal, and hastened again to her apartment, to confirm herself in the opinion she had formed of Blacket House's intentions. Every thought tended to add to her conviction that she was correct, and told her that he never would succeed in his scheme. He would now, for certain, endeavour to see her alone, and lay before her the danger into which she had plunged herself, and the bargain by which she would be relieved from it. But she would defeat him; she would renounce her walks in the woods, desert, for a time, her bowers, and bid adieu to her silver Kirtle. She would keep her apartment under a pretence of slight indisposition—far from an untruth—and, in the meantime, try to devise some mode of relief from her painful situation.

But the solicitude of her parents interfered, in some degree, with these plans. They discovered that she was not so ill as to be unable to seek what might do her service—her former walks and amusements around Kirconnel Lee; and thus was she obliged to yield to kindness; yet she contrived to have her parents near her, so as to deprive Blacket House of an opportunity of communicating to her his imputed plan of enforcing his suit. As yet, his silence had been continued: her parents were still in ignorance; and it was only (so she argued) because he had not hitherto found her alone, that his dreaded communication had not as yet been made. On the occasion of her first walk, however, she, by some untoward chance, was left in one of the arbours alone, and the opportunity (the first that had occurred) was seized by him—Blacket House was again before her, and all her fears were in a moment roused. Their eyes met with an intelligence they had never before possessed. Every passing thought seemed to be mutually read, while a few words of ordinary import seemed to be only as a preparation to his expected statement. Helen did not dare to leave him; she feared to rouse his anger, and yet she wanted courage to reply with ordinary pertinence to his remarks. His eye was constantly fixed on her, and the few words he uttered came with difficulty and pain; yet was there not the slightest allusion to the secret he undoubtedly held locked up in his breast. Was he not to bring forward his threat of exposing her, as a wrenching instrument, to force from her a consent that he was satisfied would never be given voluntarily? There was no indication of any such issue. What could be the true meaning of this dark-minded man's conduct? Again he had disappointed her fearful anticipations. He had not told her parents; he was not to tell herself. What then was he to do? She could not answer her self-put question; and her surprise when he parted from her, after a short conversation, conducted with difficulty, with his secret unapproached, and

the mysterious stare of his illegible eye, was not less than her terror of the anticipated issue when she first encountered him.

This new extraordinary element in the subject of her meditations and fears disarranged all her ideas, and sent her thoughts in new channels for a discovery of what might be the secret plans of her cousin. She sighed for an interview with her lover; but that, she was satisfied, would be attended with great danger; and thus reduced to her own resources, she passed the night following her meeting with Blacket House in still increasing pain and difficulty. In the morning she was visited in her own chamber by her mother, who appeared, from the serious aspect of her countenance, to have something of great importance to communicate.

"Helen," began the good matron, "though your father and I have seldom broached the subject of love and marriage in your presence, we have, with heartfelt satisfaction, observed and understood that the man who alone has our consent to win your virgin heart is your own choice. Your wooing has lasted so long, that the very birds in the woods are familiar with your persons and converse; and surely this is not to last always. You are twenty years old, my dear Helen, at the next Beltane, the first of May; and I know that it is Blacket House's wish that your happiness may be crowned by a union within as short a period as we will agree to fix. I have broken the matter to you, my love; and as I am well acquainted with the fluttering of Love's wings when Hymen enters the bower, I will not urge you to fix a day at present, but leave you to the pleasant meditations my communication cannot but call forth. I shall send your breakfast to your bedroom this morning, my love; but I hope we may walk in the afternoon. Say nothing, Helen. Adieu! adieu!"

And the mother left the room rapidly, as if to avoid noticing the blushes of the supposed happy damsel. Helen

heard the words uttered, as one may be supposed to feel the syllables of a condemnation falling upon the heart. It was well that her mother departed so rapidly, for the agitation the kind parent attributed to joy, was but the prelude to a faint, which retained her cold and struggling in its relentless arms for a considerable period. The first indications of consciousness were, if possible, more terrible than the last thoughts that frightened it away. For a long period she sat upon the couch where she had heard the dreadful intelligence, and, passing her hand over her brow, tried to collect her energies, so as to be able to contemplate the full extent of her evil. She thought she could now see some connection between the announcement made by her mother and the extraordinary and mysterious conduct of Blacket House, though she was satisfied that neither of her parents possessed any knowledge of her intercourse with Kirkpatrick. The scheme of the early marriage might originate in the fears of her cousin, while his secresy was only still maintained till he found that she would not yield to her parents' authority; when would be the time for using his threat of disclosure to Helen, to compel her consent. All this reasoning seemed founded in existing circumstances and appearances; but so confused were her thoughts, and so painful every effort of her mind to acquire clearer views, that she felt inclined to renounce reasoning on a subject that seemed at every turn to defeat all her efforts to come to the real truth. Her misery was at least certain; for now, while the absolute necessity of a disclosure of her secret love became more peremptory and inevitable, the circumstances under which it would be made were such as would add to the unhappiness of her parents, and to the apparent deceit and treachery of her own nature, which was, notwithstanding, incapable of guile.

Meanwhile, the effects of so much mental anguish, acting upon a tender frame, became soon apparent in her pale

countenance and swollen eyes. She would not leave her apartment; and when her mother again visited her, she saw a change on her daughter very different from that which accompanies the character of a bride in prospective. The circumstance surprised the old lady; but still so satisfied was she that there could exist no objection to a lover whom she had (as was thought) cherished for years, that it never occurred to her that the change in her daughter was attributable to the announcement she had made to her; while Helen herself, oppressed with the secret which she struggled (as yet in vain) to divulge, shunned a subject which she found herself unable to treat in such a way as would insure to her relief from her sorrow. Every effort was made to get her out into the woods, where her former scenes might enliven her mind, and bring back her wonted spirits, which, chiming the musical bells of youth's happy glee, used to charm the age-stricken hearts of her parents. But these scenes had lost their power over her. The secrets Blacket House had to divulge still lay like an unholy spirit upon her heart, killed its energies, and rendered her miserable. She expected the additional sorrow of his society in these forced walks, and her grief was mixed with surprise at his absence. He was often at the house, but he avoided her. She even saw him turn into a by-path, to get out of the way in which she walked—a circumstance as inexplicable as any of the prior difficulties with which the whole affair was beset on every side. She continued her meditations, called up repeated energies to nerve her for her disclosure, and, with many a sigh, felt them die away, and the tongue cleave to her mouth, as the unavailing effort shook her frame.

She had been in the habit of meeting Kirkpatrick at regular intervals; but two of the stated periods had passed without an interview. The third was approaching; and she trembled as the necessity of throwing herself on his

bosom, and seeking counsel in her difficulty, appeared to her in such a form as to shake her resolution not to encounter another night-meeting with her cousin. On the morning of that evening when she must repair to the burying-ground, or lose the chance of meeting Kirkpatrick for a considerable time, it was announced to her parents, in her presence, at the table of the morning meal, that Blacket House had, on the previous day, gone on a visit to a relation in a very distant part of the country, and that he would not return for eight days. She heard it, and her eyes were involuntarily turned up to heaven, in thanksgiving for the opportunity she now enjoyed of sobbing out her sorrows on the bosom of her Kirkpatrick, and getting good counsel in her distress. She said nothing when the announcement was made, and heard, without heeding, the remarks of her parents. Her thoughts were in Death's Mailing, and the pallid hue of her cheek gave place for a moment to the flush that followed the fancied touch of his lips, and the pressure that brought her nearer to the bosom where lay all the relief she now had in this world. She sought more freely than she had done for some time her old retreats, and again the song of the merle had some music for her ear—so ready is the oppressed soul to seek its accustomed pleasures, that it will clutch them in the interval of a suspended grief, though sure to return. Her cousin was gone for a time; he could not cross in these paths of the wood; and, oh happy thought! she would lie on the bosom of her Kirkpatrick, and breathe forth, uninterrupted, love's sweet tale, rendered sweeter and dearer by the grief with which it was shaded.

The evening fell that night beautiful and serene. No vapour clouded the "silver sheen," and no breath of wind rustled a leaf on the trees.

"Hail to ye, bright queen!" ejaculated Helen, as she folded her mantle round her, and was on the eve of seeking the wood; "once more light me to my lover, if, after this

meeting, you should for ever hide your face among the curtains of heaven."

And, breathing quick with the rising expectation of being enclosed in his arms, she issued from the house, and sought the well-known loaning that led to the burying-ground. Her grief had sunk for a time amidst the swelling impulses of her passion; and it was not till she had been pressed to his bosom, her brow kissed by his burning lips, and deep-drawn sighs exhausted the ardour of a first embrace after so long a separation, that one single thought of the cruelty of her situation arose in her mind. They sat on the tumulus where they had sat often before. The gravestones around them lay serene in a flood of moonlight; the soft "buller" of the wimpling Kirtle was all that disturbed the silence of the night; calmly there reposed the dead of many generations; if their lives were ended, their griefs, too, were past; and Mary of the Le', whose grey monument reflected clearly the moon's light, was free from the anguish which, in struggling sighs, came from the bosom of her who was *yet* above the green mound. Helen told her lover all the extraordinary circumstances of her situation. She wept at every turn of a new difficulty, and Adam's eyes were also suffused with tears; he pressed her again to his breast, and bade her be of better heart, for that better days were coming on the wings of time.

"I confess," he said, "my dear love, that I am unable to understand the conduct of that dark-minded man; but what can he do, if my Helen should yet redeem her error, and make this necessary disclosure? That is alone the cure of our pain. Oh, Helen! what a load of evil might have been averted from our heads by the exercise of a little self-command!"

"I see it, I feel it," replied she; "but there are powers higher than the resolves of mortals. I have struggled with myself till the blood was sent back in my veins, and fright-

ened nature saved the powerless victim of grief by the mantle of unconsciousness. What, Adam, shall I do? I feel I am unequal to the task of speaking a daughter's rebellion and a traitor's resolution."

"When everything is explained, Helen," replied the other, "the treachery disappears, and a father and mother's love will not die under the passing cloud of a little anger. Think of our bliss, love! Did hope never bring courage to your tongue, Helen? Ah, what would that bright goddess make Adam Fleming dare!"

"And what," said she, "would Helen Bell not dare for the love she bears to her Adam, if that sacred feeling of a daughter's duty were overcome? But it must be. I shall fall upon my mother's neck, and weep out with burning tears of repentance a daughter's contrition. I will appeal to the heart of a mother and a woman. I will conjure up her own first love, move again the spring of her earliest affection, and feign to her my father lost, and her heart wrecked. Ay, Adam, hope—the hope of the possession of you—will accomplish all this. Helen has said it, and the issue will prove."

This burst of generous resolution produced a flood of tears. She crept closer to him, and the throbs of her heart were heard in the silence which reigned among the graves. A rustling sound among the trees roused her; she lifted her head, and fixed her eyes on a part of the wood on the other side of the Kirtle. For a moment she watched some movements not noticed by her lover. They rose, and Adam stood aside to get a better view of the interruption. In an instant she clung to his bosom; a loud shot reverberated through the wood; Helen fell dead—the ball destined for Kirkpatrick having been received by the devoted maiden, who saw the hand uplifted that was to do the deed of blood. Neither scream nor audible sigh came from her; one spring when the ball entered the heart—and death!

Kirkpatrick saw at once death and the cause of it, and in an instant he gave pursuit. Springing with a bound over the Kirtle, he seized Blacket House in the act of flight. The murderer turned, sword in hand, and a battle was fought in the wood, such as never was witnessed in the heat of the contest of armies. Had his opponent had twenty lives, the fury of Kirkpatrick would have been unsatiated by them all. His spirit was roused to that of a demon; a supernatural strength nerved his arm; he despised life and all its blessings; the world had in an instant lost for him any charms, but as the place where lived that one man whose blood was to glut his vengeance. His sword found the heart of Blacket House, and twenty wounds verified the ballad:—

"I lighted down my sword to draw—
I hacked him in pieces sma'—
I hacked him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me."

He returned to the burying-ground. His Helen's body was as cold as that of those who lay beneath.

"O Helen fair beyond compare,
I'll mak a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart for evermair
Until the day I dee."

Such is the story of Helen Bell, a subject that has employed the pen of many a poet, and brought tears to the eyes of millions. We sometimes, according to our privilege, amuse our readers with pure unadulterated fiction. Would that our task had been such on this occasion!—for we prefer the sorrow which fancy, imitating truth, rouses in the heart, to the depressing power of "owre true a tale." We may add, that the Maid of Kirconnel is more frequently called Helen Irving than Helen Bell, in consequence of some doubt as to whether her mother was not really one of the Bells, and her father an Irving. After giving the matter all due

consideration, and searching several authorities, we are satisfied that the truth is as we have related it. Our very ingenious friend, Professor Gillespie, in a section of the "Gleanings of the Covenant," says that the beautiful ballad, some of the lines of which we have quoted, was written on "Helen Palmer." We must have his authority.

TOM DUNCAN'S YARN.

WILLIAM DUNCAN had lived nearly thirty years in the service of a landed proprietor in Dumfries-shire; where his honest, upright, trustworthy character had gained him the esteem and respect of his employer; and he was looked upon more in the light of a humble friend, than of a hired menial. Nearly five-and-twenty years had elapsed since his marriage to Janet, who had long before been his "neebor" servant. Their family consisted of two children, a son and daughter; the latter of whom had been, at the time our story commences, for some time married to a farm-servant, and was living in a cottage closely adjoining her father's. The son had been sent, when about seventeen years of age, with cattle to Annan, and had there made acquaintance with some seafaring men, whose stories of the wonders of other lands had excited his curiosity, and awakened an irrepressible longing to witness the strange sights he had heard of. It was in vain that his father and mother strove to divert his thoughts into another channel—"he *would* be a sailor;" and they at last wisely consented to what they could not prevent. About two years after his departure, Willie's good old master died; having left his faithful servant a small annuity, sufficient to make his old age comfortable—for he was now almost superannuated. The old gentleman had died childless, leaving his estate to a distant relative; and his successor, knowing the estimation in which Willie had been held by his late master, allowed him to live rent-free in one of the cottages on the estate, and treated him, on all occasions, with great consideration and kindness. There was but one thing wanting to make

the old couple happy: their simple appetites were easily satisfied; they had enough and to spare, without the toil of labour; but their son, their only son, was a wanderer, and years had passed since they had received any intelligence of him, and then they had only been informed that he had gone to some foreign station. "Oh, could we but see him ance mair afore we dee!" was often their exclamation.

One stormy night in October, the old couple were startled by a loud rap at the door.

"Preserve us!" said Janet, in great alarm, "what's that? Wha can that be chappin at the door on sic a nicht as this? Maybe it's some puir seekin body, wantin shelter frae the blast. Up, Willie, man, an' ask wha it is."

"It's me, faither—it's Betty," replied the voice of the daughter, in answer to her father's queries; "let me in."

"What's brocht ye oot, woman," said Willie, "in sic a clash o' rain as this?"

"There's a puir sailor lad come to oor hoose," replied she, "an' he wants something to eat an' drink, an' we haena a bite o' cake left: hae ye ony to spare? An', what think ye, faither? he kens oor Tam weel, an' says he saw him no that lang syne."

"Kens oor Tam!" said the old man; "what for did ye no bring him wi' ye? Gie's doon my plaid; I'll gang an' speak to him mysel."

"Na, na, faither; ye maunna cross the door while it's pourin this gate. I'll fetch him when he's had his supper. I'd hae brocht him afore, but I thocht maybe he micht be makin ye believe oor Tam was comin hame, or some sic clavers, an' ye wad be wearyin to see him, an' maybe no see him after a'."

"An' what for micht he no be comin hame?" said Willie. "It's time he war, I think, if he wishes to find the auld folk to the fore.

"Well, but, faither, suppose he war to tell ye that he

had seen oor Tam twa or three days syne, an' that ye micht expeck to see him hame supe?"

"Mercy, lass! what's the matter wi' ye, wi' yer maybes an' yer supposes? What gars ye gang swaggerin up an' doon that gait, lookin as ye were demented? There's something pleasin ye by common. If 'twar Tam himsel, ye couldna be mair uplifted."

"An' guid richt hae I to be uplifted, mither, if ye kent a'."

"Eh, it's Tam himsel!" almost screamed the old woman; "where is he? Let me see my bairn."

"Here's all that's left of him, mother," said a fine, stout-looking sailor; who, unable any longer to restrain his impatience, stumped in on a wooden leg just as Janet was speaking.

"My bairn! my bairn!" sobbed the old woman, throwing her arms round him; "mony a lang day hae I prayed to see ye ance mair; an' noo that I hae ye, oh, do I see ye a puir cripple!"

"Oh, that's nothing, mother; nothing but the fortune of war. If I'd lost my head instead of my leg, mother, I wouldn't have been here to tell my own story."

"That's Gude's truth; an' great reason hae we to be thankfu it's nae waur. But, oh! it's a sair dispensation."

"Ah, old boy! how are you?" said Tom, shaking his father heartily by the hand; "all alive and hearty—eh?"

"Weel aneugh, weel aneugh, Tam; just choppin on; but richt glad am I to see ye again, my son. But, Tam, that wasna the gate ye wad hae spoken to yer auld faither afore ye gaed frae hame."

"My manner of speaking may be changed, father," replied the young man, respectfully; "but there's no change in my heart—that's true-blue still; and it'll be long before I can clear off my reckoning with you for all your kindness to me. No, no, father, my *heart's* in the right place still."

"Weel, my man, I hope sae. Sit doon an' tell us a' that's happened ye sin' we last heard frae ye. But wait a wee. Janet, seek oot the best that's in the hoose for the puir fallow; an', whan he's had a guid supper, he'll be in better fettle for giein us his cracks."

"Tak aff yer jacket, my bonny man," said his mother; "an' hing it up afore the fire, an' draw in till't yersel. Willie, I'm thinkin there's something in the bottle. I'll put on the kettle, an' we'll gie the lad something he'll be nane the waur o'."

After the sailor had done his devoirs at the supper-table, the whole party drew round the fire, and the old man, lighting his "cutty," said—

"Noo, Tam, tell us a' aboot what ye've been doin. an' hoo ye cam to lose yer leg."

"It's a terrible long yarn, father, and I'm afeared ye'll be glad to sing out Avast! before I've spun it out; besides, you'll not understand my sea lingo."

"Nae fear o' that," replied he; "ye ken I was ance a bit o' a sailor mysel. We could see the Solway frae the hoose I hired at when I was a callan."

"But, eh, Tam, my man," said old Janet, "ye talk English as weel's the grand folk doon by."

"Ay, ay, mother; leave me alone for that. My messmates used to say as how I ought to have been a Methodist preacher, seein I knowed so well how to tip them the dictionary."

"Hear till him!" said the delighted mother, holding up her hands in admiration.

"But, howsomdever, they haven't made me proud on't, you see, with all their blarney. But I must carry on, or my yarn 'll reach from this to the end of next week. It's now six years since I got a berth on board one o' them Newcastle colliers, and a jolly time we had on't; for, though we'd lashin' to do, and no want of wet jackets, there was

always a full bread-bag, and swipes and grub at no allowance. They're the craft to teach a man his duty! Well, I'd been in that trade about a year, when I goes ashore one day with the mate at Wapping; and, while we were sitting comfortably swigging our grog, the landlord comes rushing in, and, says he, 'My lads, you must brush; there's the pressgang a-coming.' Hearing that, the mate and I bolted out of the door, and ran for it; but they twigged us, and gave chase. They nabbed the mate in less nor no time; but I cracked on a press o' sail, and was dropping them astern fast, when, as I was looking back at them over my shoulder, I ran stem on to an old fishwife. My eyes, what a crash! I sends her and her sprats a-swimming in the gutter, and I falls as flat as a flounder on the pavement, spouting out blood from my nose, like a whale. Well, to cut a long yarn short, we were taken on board the tender, and afterwards drafted into the Fire-eater frigate, which was stationed on the north coast of Ireland. I was very well off on board the frigate. 'Sharp' was the word, to be sure, and the cat often wagged her tail; but then, as long as a man was smart and willing, he'd never no 'casion to be afeared: there was never no favour nor affection there. Well, as I said afore, we were cruising off the coast of Ireland, when, one day, it came on to blow great guns from the westward. For three blessed days, there was the little Fire-eater tossing and tumbling, and kicking up her starn, and going through as many manœuvres as a dancing-master, till at last we were driven so far west that we made the coast of Argyle; then 'bout ship we went, and stood away again to the eastward. Well, we carried on for a matter of four-and-twenty hours, with a little more northing in the wind, when we made land again, and hauled up two or three points to clear it. The weather was so thick ye might a'most have cut it with a knife, and there wasn't such a thing as a dirty face on board, the sea made a clean wash of everything, and it blowed—

my eyes, how it did blow! Mayhap, you call this a gale, but you wouldn't have heard it beside that. It was bad enough to be on deck, but ten times worse below; a devil of a sea smashed in some of the ports, and the leeside of the main-deck was three feet deep in water. And then, while we were hard at work, stuffing up the holes where the water was pouring in, and pumping, there was an awful stramash on deck; for there was the land again, close aboard of us ahead. 'Wear ship!' was now the cry, and away went the little hooker again on the other tack, and bravely did she behave—a better sea-boat never swam; for, battered and knocked about as she was, she showed true pluck; no sooner was she knocked over by a sea, than she rose again like a duck, though she was forced to shake her feathers now and then. Well, at eight-bells in the first watch (midnight), we thought it was all up with us again, for there was the surf breaking on the rocks little more than half-a-mile on the lee-bow—and touch-and-go it was; but our tight little barky—though she was anything but tight by that time—though she lay over till she was half buried alive, looked boldly up in the wind, and shot past like a sea-bird. If there hadn't been such a devil of a noise, you might have heard a pin drop just then. There was not a man on deck who did not hold his breath, and gasp, when the danger was past, like one that's just escaped drowning.

"'By the powers!' says I to Bill Jones, 'that was a close shave.'

"'You may say that,' says he.

"Just as he was a-speaking, the moon shone out, and there, not six hundred yards to leeward, were breakers again. The sea was running as high as our tops at the time; but beyond and above it we saw the breakers curling their white tops, foaming, and dashing, and roaring, as if they were raging to get at us, as you may have seen wild

beasts tearing and leaping, and striving to break their chain to get out of the menagerie at their prey. Now, indeed, it seemed there was no chance of escape—there was no room to wear, and the ship was already half-buried under her canvas; our only hoped seemed to be in our ground tackle, and orders were given to clear away the anchors, and to have all ready for cutting away the masts. That was an awful moment; we thought it was all up with us, and there was many a pale cheek, and many a muttered prayer for mercy and deliverance; for the worst amongst us are glad to look aloft when death is staring us in the face below. Our captain was as brave a fellow, and as good a seaman, as ever stepped a plank. What his feelings may have been, it's impossible for the likes o' me to say; but I never seed him more cool in a calm than at that moment, when the bravest might have flinched, and no man could have cast it in his teeth. His voice never shook when he gave his orders, loud, clear, and distinct; and his gallant bearing cheered the down-hearted, and gave fresh pluck to the daring. He was a trump, that fellow! He ordered the foretopsail and foresail to be set. It seemed to be a rash and dangerous experiment, but it succeeded. Nothing venture, nothing win; we might have lost our masts, but we saved the ship. The little frigate lay over for a minute, as if she was never going to rise no more; all hands thought the masts must go, for everything aloft grinned again, and the rigging was as taut as bars of iron; but it held on, and the frigate righted again, and sprung ahead, as you have seen a hare make a fresh stretch from the hounds—and we were all saved. We shaved the reef so close, that I'm blessed if I couldn't a'most have chucked a biscuit on shore."

"Mercy!" said the old woman; "what an escape!"

"Ay, mother, we sailors have many a narrow squeak for it, that you long-shore folks never dream of; but you know,

as the song says, 'There's a sweet little cherub sits perched up aloft, to take care of the life of poor Jack;' and we're as safe, for the matter o' that, on the stormy sea, as you are on the terry firmy, as our doctor used to call the land."

"Weel, but what was the upshot o' the business?" said Willie.

"Why, ye see, though we had escaped so mirac'lously like, we were still too near a lee-shore to be quite comfortable; for we'd another headland to weather afore we could say we was clear o' danger. There was never an eye closed on board that night, and a long and weary night it was. Blessed if ever I seed a craft stand up under her canvas as our little barky did, carrying on at the rate of seven knots an hour, while the sea made a fair breach over her every now and then, and made her stagger from stem to starn. At last, 'old roarer,' as I've heard our doctor call the daybreak, made its appearance, and we saw the land we was afeared o', some distance astarn. After that, the gale began to moderate, and a fair wind soon took us under our anchorage."

Here old Janet interrupted her son, with, "Weel, but Tam; ye haena tauld us yet hoo ye cam to lose yer leg."

"Never hurry no man's cattle, mother," replied the sailor; "leave me to spin my own yarn my own way, and I'll come to the end on't at last; I told you you'd cry out Avast! afore I'd done."

"Hoot, Janet," said Willie, "let the lad tak his ain gate. It just astonishes me to hear him rinnin the words oot sae glib, an' him sic a solid callant as he used to be."

"Weel, weel, gang on, my man; I'll no meddle wi' ye ony mair."

"Then here goes! Carry on again, says I," replied Tom. "The frigate I belonged to afterwards went on the Jamaica station, and cruised about, to protect the merchantmen from the pirates as infested them seas. Well, we

were dodging about one night, under topgallantsails, off Cape St Antonio, with just wind enough to make the barky crawl through the water. It was my look-out on deck, and I sees something like a large bird, as it seemed to me, hovering about in a patch of clear sky; so I stared at it, and stared at it, but I couldn't make out what it could be, for it kept moving backwards and forwards, but always in the same part of the sky. So I calls the midshipman of the watch, and says to him—

"'D'ye see that large bird a-flying about there, sir? It's the biggest I ever seed, and it keeps always about the same place; I can't make out what it can be after.' Well, he looks and wonders like myself, and then he goes to fetch the night-glass; and, after he'd squinted through it for a minute or two, he just mutters to himself, 'The devil!' and away he runs aft to the luftenant of the watch, and brings him a-running back with him.

"'Whereabouts?' said the luftenant.

"'There, sir; just under that cloud that's hiding the moon.'

"'Ay, so it is!' said he; 'I see her spars plain enough; nothing but a royal loose—and there's her hull!' he continued, as the moon broke out, and showed us a long, low, rakish-looking square brig, lying as snug as a duck in the water, about two miles on our lee-bow. 'I don't like the look of her at all,' says the luff, and away he goes to make his report. She seemed to have twigged us at the same time, and didn't like the look of us neither; for, almost before the smoke had cleared away from our bows, after we had spoken to her with one of the forecastle guns, we could hear the pipe on board of her, the night was so still; and, in a crack, she was one cloud of canvas, from the truck to the lower boom. Blowed if ever I seed a man-of-war do the thing smarter. 'All hands make sail in chase!' was the cry on board of us, and, in a very short time, the water

was talking Spanish under our bows. Every stitch of sail was packed on the ship: but the stranger stood right away before the light breeze, and crawled away from us fast, for that was our worst sailing point. We kept a-blazing away with our bow guns, to bring her to; but the more we fired, the more she wouldn't stop; and we might just as well have fired at the moon, for all the mischief we could do her. At daylight, she was hull down ahead; but the breeze freshened with the rising sun, and we began to fetch up our starnway, and, before noon, we began to drop our shot into her. She wasn't slow in answering at first from her stern guns, which were uncommon well sarved, and every now and then walked a ball through our sails, but luckily did not strike our masts. We were overhauling her in great style, peppering away as fast as we could, when all at once she began to yaw about, and, giving a broad sheer away to port, she shortened sail, and then came to the wind again on the starboard tack, with her maintopsail to the mast, and doused a red rag she had a-flying at the main. We gave over firing, and soon bowled up alongside of her, rolled up the small sail, hauled up the foresail, and backed the main-yard. Our captain hailed her in a devil of a rage, and was answered in some lingo I couldn't understand; but the fellow pointed to his boat, as had a plank knocked out of her side; and orders were given to man our boats, and send them on board, to take possession of her. Well, just as we were a-lowering the boats, and all hands pleased at the thoughts of a good prize, blowed if she didn't quietly steal her fore-yard forward a little, to gather way, and before you could say Jack Robinson, she was braced sharp up, with all her small kites set, and, as she stood across our bows, she pitched it into us in style. It was a blind look-out, sartinly, to let the sneaking scoundrel slip through our fingers that way; but there was no help for it now. The boats were secured

again; and in a few minutes we were after her. As long as the breeze held strong and steady, we had rather the best on't; but it soon began to die away, and then we thought we would lose her for sartin, when a lucky shot crippled her gaff, which soon snapped like a carrot. Now that so much after-sail was off her, she couldn't keep her wind, and we neared her fast. 'Don't spare her, my lads!' shouted the captain; and we *did* pour the grape and canister into her in fine style, till she was a regular wreck; but she showed pluck to the last, and kept blazing away at us as long as she was able. At last she got tired, and gave over firing, and struck her colours. The boats were well manned and armed, and were again sent to take possession of her; the frigate running almost alongside, and threatening to blow her out of the water, if she attempted any further resistance. When we were coming up under her quarter in the boats, we heard the sound of loud quarrelling on board, and when we got fairly on the quarterdeck, we found the captain of the pirate swearing like a trooper, and saying as how his crew had betrayed him, like cowardly dogs, as they were. He kept stamping up and down the deck like mad, looking as if he could eat the luftenant, when he took his sword from him. Ten or twelve desperate-looking rough'uns as ever I seed gathered round him, muttering that it was better to die on the quarterdeck like men, than hang like dogs at the yardarm, and all at once they snatched up some tommyhawks as was lying on the deck, and made a desperate rush upon us. We had an awful tussle for it; and, just as we were in the thick on't, hand to hand, up runs a young man from below, and sings out to us, 'Save me—save me!' As soon as the pirate captain seed him, he ran at him like a tiger, and, seizing him by the throat, shouted out, 'Dead men tell no tales!' and raised his tommyhawk to cleave him to the skull. Poor lad! he thought his signal for sailing was made, that it was all up

with him. He muttered, 'Mercy! mercy!' But poor mercy would he have met with, if I hadn't run up just in time, and fetched the fellow a slash with my cutlass, which made him drop the tommyhawk like a hot potato. He left the lad, and turned round upon me, gnashing his teeth like nothing at all with very rage, and, before I had time to wink my eye, he snatches a loaded pistol out of my belt, and smashes my leg to shivers. Down I dropped; but before he could finish what he had begun so cleverly, a pistol flashed close to his head, and he staggered, and fell, never to rise no more. When I came to my senses again, I found myself in the sick-bay, on board my own ship. The surgeon was forced to cut off my leg to save my life; and when we arrived at Port Royal, I was sent ashore to the hospital, and afterwards got my discharge."

"An' what o' the—what d'ye ca' them—rats?" said old Janet.

"Oh, they were taken into Port Royal, and tried for piracy; there was lots of evidence against them, the bloodthirsty rascals, and they were all hanged, except three or four. And so there's an end of my yarn, father; and a precious long one, I daresay, you think it is; and here am I come home a poor useless cripple, to moor myself for life, if so be you'll let me come to an anchor under your lee."

"Ay, my boy," replied the old man, clapping him kindly on the shoulder, "as long's there's a plack to the fore in the purse, or a gowpenfu' o' meal in the kist, ye'se aye be welcome to a share."

"True-blue for ever!" shouted Tom; "but, father, it's not come to that yet; I'm not going to anchor without paying the harbour dues. Here," continued he, tossing a well-filled purse to the old man; "I haven't been so long afloat for nothing; there's a good whack of prize-money there, and I'll come in for a pension by and by, if I've luck."

"Keep it yersel, Tam," replied Willie; "I'm no gaun to touch a bawbee o't. Gude be thankit! I hae aneugh an' to spare."

Finding his father firm in his refusal, Tom at last said—

"Well, well, keep it for me, if you won't keep it for yourself. It won't keep company with me long; for, somehow, whenever I cast off the standing part of a guinea, it devilish soon unreeves itself in quarter less no time. Stow it away in your own lockers, and serve it out to me now and then, when I wants baccy."

As this seemed a very rational kind of arrangement, the old man consented to become his son's banker.

"And now that I've run all my line off the reel, father, you must give me a spell, and let's hear all that's been put down in your log since I left you."

"Oh, it's no muckle I hae to tell, Tam," replied he; "ae day has been as like the ane that gaed afore't, as ae pear to anither; I was born here, and here I'll maist likely dee."

"But what's become o' bonny Jean Cameron, father? I remember well how fond I was of her, when I was a boy at school; I've oft thought on her, when we've been keeping up Saturday night, at sea. Many's the *tot* I've emptied to her health."

"She's still to the fore, Tam, and 'maist as bonny as ever; she was married four years syne, but she's a widow noo." He then went on to tell his son the other changes that had taken place since his departure, the principal of which was the death of his late master and kind friend, Murray of Greenha'. "He was a guid freend to me," said Willie, drawing the back of his hand over his eyes; "but he's gane noo. I've nae cause to compleen o' my present maister, for a kinder couldna be; but he'll never be to me like him that's gane."

James Hamilton, old Willie Duncan's present master, had made a large fortune in the West India trade, and was

proprietor of a valuable estate in Jamaica. For a series of years, so rapidly had he amassed wealth, that he seemed to be a peculiar favourite of Fortune; but Fortune has ever been a capricious dame, and those who are apparently highest in her good graces, are often made to feel how uncertain is the tenure by which they hold them. She seems, like some of the savages of the western world, to pamper her victims with the good things of this life, only to make them feel more keenly the reverses she is preparing for them. James Hamilton was one of those men, unfortunately too rare, who do not allow themselves to be dazzled by the flattering appearances of present prosperity, but who, aware of the changeable and fleeting nature of all earthly possessions, hold on the even tenor of their course, with minds prepared for every vicissitude. He always acted upon high and pure principle, and never, in the height of prosperity, forgot that the same Supreme Benefactor, who in his bounty had blessed him with abundance, might, in his wisdom, think fit to try him with adversity. He was a kind-hearted and liberal man, but withal cool, quiet, and methodical in his manners and actions. Heedless of the opinion of the world, he acted up to the dictates of his own conscientious feelings of right and wrong; and his strict notions of evenhanded justice often led him to enter into engagements, and to perform actions, which, though perfectly just and rigidly honest, bore, in the eyes of a misjudging world, the impress of calculating selfishness and niggardly illiberality. But, notwithstanding, there was such straightforward honesty, such child-like, confiding simplicity, and such pure and unpretending Christianity, evident in his character, that it was impossible for those who knew him well not to esteem and love him. His principal failing was one which "leaned to virtue's side." Upright, and honourable, and candid, he thought all others like himself, and was often the dupe of designing and crafty men; who, with more worldly wisdom,

were far his inferiors in judgment, and sound, practical sense; but who practised upon his confiding nature by the semblance of qualities which they did not possess. He had long been blessed with the companionship of an amiable and excellent wife; and, when she was snatched from him by a sudden and virulent disorder, he could ill have borne his bereavement, had he not been supported by the conviction that she was only removed to a purer and happier state of existence; and he bowed with submission to the decrees of that Being who "doeth all things wisely." His only son, John, who had been an object of most tender solicitude to both his parents, had been educated with the greatest care; and, though apparently born the heir to great wealth, had undergone a regular probation in a mercantile house in the city, of which he hoped soon to become a partner. Many of the elder Hamilton's friends had expressed their surprise at his choice of a profession for his son, and wondered that, rolling in wealth, as he was supposed to be, he should condemn his heir to the drudgery of a counting-house: but events proved that he had acted wisely and well. The sudden and totally unexpected failure of a large West India house with which he was connected, and to support which he had advanced considerable sums, gave the first shock to his credit; and, as is often the case, reverse followed reverse afterwards, until utter ruin seemed to be inevitable. Undazzled by prosperity, Hamilton proved himself to be equally unshaken by adversity. His character as a mercantile man stood so high for unimpeachable integrity and indefatigable industry, that he might have made head for some years longer against the stream of adverse circumstances, and might, perhaps, eventually have overcome them; but the plain path of duty was the one he had followed through life, and he did not desert it now. He immediately wound up his affairs, and, having settled with his creditors to the uttermost farthing, he found himself almost destitute,

with the exception of his personal property, and the West India estate; which, however, had for some years barely paid its own expenses. It was now that Hamilton had reason to rejoice that his beloved son had, by his wise foresight, been rendered independent of circumstances, and had been bred up in habits which would enable him soon to acquire a comfortable establishment for himself. He immediately sold his house and furniture, and retired to a humble lodging in the city, where, with patient and laudable energy, he exerted himself to recover the ground he had lost. Sudden and unexpected as his reverses had been, he never murmured at the hardship of his lot, convinced that all the dispensations of Providence are wisely and mercifully ordered, and happy in the consciousness that he had nothing to reproach himself with, as far as concerned his dealing with his fellow-men. About this time, his son John was sent out to Jamaica, on some mercantile speculation, by the house with which he was connected, and obtained permission to remain some time on the island, to inquire into the management of his father's plantation; and, if necessary and possible, to effect its sale. He was about twenty-four years of age; tall, and handsome in his appearance, and a youth of excellent dispositions and steady principles. By his persevering and conscientious attention to his duties, he had gained the confidence and esteem of his employers, and had acquired the character of an active and clever man of business. He had long been a secret admirer of Ellen Winterton, the orphan child of an officer in the army, and who was living under the guardianship of the head of his firm. Accustomed, however, always to keep his feelings under control, and to regulate his desires by the rules of honour and of prudence, young Hamilton did not think himself justified in making his proposals in form, until fortune should have enabled him to do so as an independent man. The change in his father's circumstances,

while it called for fresh exertions on his part, seemed to separate him still more widely from the object of his wishes; but he bore his prolonged probation with cheerfulness, and his grief at parting with Ellen was almost neutralised by the animating prospect of serving his beloved father. After an absence of some months, during which he had written home several times, a letter was received from him, announcing his having left Kingston harbour, in the fast-sailing, well-armed merchant-ship, the Delight, and expressing his hope soon to join his father again. Fortune, in the meanwhile, had smiled again upon the elder Hamilton, in a way he little expected. He was surprised one evening by the receipt of a note from a gentleman, whose signature was unknown to him, and who requested a personal interview with him next morning, at a neighbouring coffee-house. Thither he repaired accordingly, wondering what could be the nature of the communication the stranger wished to make to him.

"Mr Hamilton, I believe?" said a gentleman, dressed in deep mourning, to whom the waiter pointed him out, as he entered the room. "I know you well by name and character, Mr Hamilton, though I have not the happiness of your personal acquaintance, and I am happy to be the bearer of pleasing intelligence to you. I am one of the executors of Mr Murray of Greenha', who died childless, and, in consequence of the demise of his near relations, has made you his heir; and I have to congratulate you upon your accession to a valuable landed property and a handsome fortune."

Mr Hamilton was not a little surprised at this announcement. Murray of Greenha' was a distant relation of his late father; but the families had had no communication for several years, and he had almost forgotten that such a person was in existence. This unexpected revolution, by which he was again restored from poverty to wealth and comfort, excited his warmest feelings of gratitude and thankfulness towards that Being in whom he had always trusted with

unwavering confidence. He immediately set off to the north, to visit his newly-acquired property, and to carry into effect the provisions of his benefactor's will. Among other duties devolved upon him, was that of providing for our friend Willie Duncan, whose upright, manly character, and grateful attachment to his late master, gave him strong claims upon the good-will and respect of his successor. He had been some time in the north when he heard of his son's having left Jamaica; but months instead of weeks had elapsed, and still no further accounts had been received of him, and he began to be seriously alarmed on his account. His agent in town, in reply to his anxious inquiries, informed him that the Delight was known to have left Kingston harbour at the time specified, but that she had not since been heard of; and, as she was so very much beyond her expected time, and several ships had arrived in England, which had only just reached the harbour when she left it, there was now little doubt of her loss. This was sad news to the elder Hamilton, and it required the exercise of all his Christian fortitude to enable him to bear up under the heavy dispensation. He had gained unexpected wealth; but he for whom he prized it had been snatched from him. One afternoon, shortly after the return of the sailor, Tom Duncan, Mr Hamilton was sauntering, in a melancholy mood, along the high road near Greenha', and was scarcely aroused from his abstraction by the rattling of a post-chariot, which was almost upon him before he was aware of its approach.—"Stop!—stop!" said a voice from the inside. The door was dashed open, and in a moment the bewildered father was in the arms of his long-lost son. It was some time before either of them could speak. At last, the father sobbed out—

"My dear, dear son! I thought you were torn from me for ever! Heaven be praised for all its mercies! I shall now die happy. But how have I been so cruelly deceived?

They told me you were lost, and my heart was almost broken. But come, come away to the house, and, after you have refreshed yourself, you can gratify my curiosity." On entering the house, John congratulated his father most affectionately on the change that had taken place in his affairs. "I am glad of it on your account, John; for myself, I care not. I was as happy with my crust and cheese, and with my consciousness that I was doing my duty, as I am now—rich beyond my fondest hopes. Yes, John, I thank Heaven, for myself, that I am blessed with a contented spirit; and, for *you*, that, when I die, you will be amply provided for." As soon as John had done ample justice to the substantial lunch placed before him, his father said to him, "If you are not much fatigued, we will take a stroll, and, while I am showing you the lions, you can be telling me your adventures."

"With all my heart," replied he.

"When we left Kingston harbour in the Delight, we were all in high glee, in the anticipation of a speedy and pleasant voyage. Our ship was one of the fastest of her class, well armed, and manned with an active and spirited crew; so that, to all human appearance, we had little to dread, either from man or the elements. We had scarcely lost sight of the land, when the wind died away to a dead calm, and the sea became as smooth and clear as a mirror, glancing back the reflection of a bright and cloudless moon. The sails flapped heavily against the masts, as the ship rolled helpless and unmanageable in the long swell, and the water dripped from her channels, as she rose again, after dipping them deep into the sea. All at once a small, dark cloud appeared on the larboard beam.

"'Oh, it's nothing,' said the mate.

"Not so thought the captain, who fortunately came upon deck at the time.

"'All hands shorten sail!' shouted he. 'Bear a hand!

Up foresail!—in royals and topgallantsails! Brace the yards round to port! Stand by topsail—haulyards and sheets!'

"These orders were barely carried into effect, when a sudden and tremendous squall struck the ship. The small sails were clued up, and the topsailyards on the caps; but the gallant little bark staggered under the shock, lay over till her gunwale almost touched the water, struggled for a moment, and then rose again. The squall had overtaken them with lightning-like rapidity, and was gone again almost as quickly. A few moments before, and a neater and snugger ship never swam the water—now, she was almost a wreck aloft. The foretopmast was hanging over the side, the jib-boom gone, the maintop-gallant-mast snapped short above the step, and the maintopsail in tatters. All this desolation had been the work of a moment; the demon of the storm had passed, and all was again calm.

"'Thank Heaven it's no worse!' said the captain. 'Two minutes sooner, and we should all have been lost! Better lose a few sticks than the ship herself. But this will be a warning to you, Mr Rogers,' said he to the mate, 'not to be foolhardy for the future.'

"All hands were immediately set to work to clear away the wreck of the spars, and were busily employed all night. It was late in the forenoon before the wreck of the foretopmast was launched clear of the ship, and a new maintopsail bent. During this interval, a light breeze had sprung up, and a strange sail hove in sight to windward. The captain mounted the rigging, and got his glass to bear upon her, and, after a long and anxious look, paced the quarterdeck with hurried and irregular steps, glancing uneasily aloft, and hailing the men to bear a hand with their mast-ropes.

"'Rogers,' said he to the mate, at the same time handing him the glass, 'take a look at that craft, and tell me what you think of her.'

"The mate looked long and carefully at her, and, return-

ing the glass to his superior, looked doubtingly and inquiringly in his face, and shook his head—

"'I don't like the look of her at all, sir.'

"'Nor I, Rogers; however, we'll say nothing about her just now. If the air continues so light, it will take her some time to reach us, and we must make good use of the opportunity. Hurry the men with the topmast. Heaven send us a cloudy night! As soon as it is dark, we'll alter our course.'

"By dint of hard work, and a suspicion among the crew that the stranger was an unpleasant neighbour, we were all ataunto, as the sailors call it, before midnight, and were standing away before the light breeze. At daylight, the captain's glass swept the horizon, and soon rested upon the object of his search. A long and steady gaze seemed to confirm both him and the mate in their first suspicion. The vessel, now considerably nearer us, had been evidently watching our motions, and was as evidently in pursuit of us. She was a long, low, rakish-looking brig, creeping along before the faint breeze, and aiding its efforts with her sweeps.

"'It's the Dare-Devil, sir!' said the mate, his cheek paling as he spoke; 'I know her now by the black fiddlehead, and her mast-heads black. A bloodier pirate never swam. The Lord have mercy upon us, for *he* won't!'

"'Call the hands aft!' said the captain.

"The men assembled on the quarterdeck in stern silence. They seemed to anticipate what was to follow; but it was evident theirs was not the quietness of fear, but of determination.

"'My lads,' said the captain, 'that stranger, we have every reason to believe, is a pirate. If there had been anything of a breeze, we might have escaped; but now, our only chance is to show her what mettle we're made of. You will have to fight for your lives; for so soon as they set foot

on this deck, they will murder every soul on board. What say you, my lads? Will you die like dogs, or fighting like brave men?'

"A simultaneous cheer from the crew was the only reply, and they were immediately dismissed to prepare for the impending conflict.

"'Ah, there she shows her teeth at last,' said the captain, as a puff of smoke burst from the brig, followed by the flash and report of a gun, the ball from which struck the water some distance from us.

"'It is of no use our attempting to escape, Rogers!' said the captain; 'he is gaining upon us fast. We will not fire a gun till he is close aboard of us, and till every shot will tell."

"The guns were all loaded with grape, the fire-arms placed in readiness on deck, and the men ordered to lie down at their quarters, and not to fire a shot till the order was given. Meantime, the pirate rapidly approached, and her shot began to tell upon our rigging and sails. The Delight kept steadily on her course; but her yards, which had been nearly square, were drawn quietly forward, one by one, to port. The pirate was sweeping up at some little distance on our quarter, and had hailed us to heave to directly, or she would sink us. 'Now, my lads,' said our captain, 'be cool and steady. I'm going to cross his hawse: as soon as the guns bear upon him, blaze away.'

"The helm was put a-starboard, and, as we crossed the bows, we poured our grape into him. The fire was not such a *raking* one as we expected; for he was too quick for us, and sheered to port almost as soon as ourselves; but it was evident that we had almost sickened him, for he widened his distance, and before night was almost hull-down to windward of us.

"'I hope we have got rid of our troublesome customer, sir,' said Rogers to the captain.

"'Don't halloo till you're through the wood,' replied he; 'we haven't done with him yet, I'm afraid. I'm much mistaken if he is not trying to play a game at humbug with us; as soon as it is dark, he will edge down upon us, and endeavour to take us by surprise. We will keep the men at quarters all night, and haul close to the wind, on the starboard tack, when darkness comes on.'

"At nightfall, strict orders were given that all the lights should be put out, except that in the binnacle; and the ship's course was altered. We were in great hopes that by these means we would elude the pursuit of the pirate; for, though the breeze was still light, the night was dark and cloudy, and the mate, after sweeping the horizon with his night-glass, said, in a joyous tone, to the captain—

"'I think we have outwitted him, sir; I see no signs of him now.'

"'Let *me* look,' said the captain. 'Holloa! What is that dark body to the northward? That infernal brig, I'll be bound. How could he have seen us?'

As he spoke, his eye glanced aloft, and there, to his great surprise, was a light shining at the mizentop-gallantmast-head!

"'What light is that?' shouted he; 'who has dared to disobey the orders? Jump up there, one of you boys, and douse it. Rogers, there's a traitor on board.'

"'Then Jose is the man, sir!'

"The Delight had lost a few hands in harbour, by fever; and, a few days before she sailed, a Portuguese seaman had been shipped to supply the place of one of them. He was an active, able-bodied fellow, and produced excellent certificates from former ships; but there was something extremely forbidding and repulsive in his countenance, and the mate was very unwilling to obey Captain Forbes's order to receive him on board. He was a man of few words; but his eyes were constantly wandering, with a furtive glance,

round the ship; and, when he did speak, it was generally to express his fear of pirates, and to inquire into the means of defence, of the Delight. On the evening before the ship sailed, he went on shore as one of the boat's crew, but did not make his appearance again till next morning. For this breach of duty he made some plausible excuse, which was unfortunately accepted. It was afterwards proved that he was one of the crew of the pirate, and had been employed to gain all the information in his power, as to our guns, time of sailing, &c., and to make private signals, if necessary.

"The brig kept hovering about till daylight, and then bore down upon us, and, when within range, fired a shot across our bows, to make us heave to. To this salutation no answer was returned, but we stood steadily on, as before, reserving our fire for closer quarters. Shot after shot was dropped into us, but still not a hand was moved on board. At last the pirate came within hail, and swore with the most horrid oaths that he would sink us, if we did not immediately heave to.

"'Now, my lads, stand by!' The men were on their feet in a moment. 'Starboard a little! Fire!' Again our grape rattled into her, and we could judge, by the bustle on her decks, and by the loud cries and execrations that reached our ears, that our fire had been a destructive one. Two of our men were killed by his discharge, and our boat amidships smashed to pieces; but he again sheered off, and, shaking his sails in the wind, dropped slowly astern. Again our hopes revived, but only to be miserably disappointed. When he was beyond the range of our short carronades, he kept dropping shot after shot into us, with deadly precision from his long gun.

"'Rogers,' said the captain, 'if this game lasts long, it is all up with us; unless the breeze freshens, we shall all be murdered like so many sheep.'

"In vain did we endeavour to come to closer quarters with him; as we shortened sail, so did he. Our guns were useless, while—crash—crash—crash—followed each remorseless shot from his long twelve. The breeze, instead of freshening, gradually died away to a calm, and we lay entirely at his mercy, for he kept sweeping round us, and, unhurt himself, inflicted deadly injuries upon us. At last, we lay a complete wreck upon the water; our gallant captain was killed, and fifteen of the men either dead or desperately wounded, and the gallant, but exhausted remnant of the crew were persuaded by the mate to consent to surrender. Our colours were accordingly hauled down; yet the pirate for some time paid no attention to this mark of submission on our part, but seemed determined to gratify his thirst for slaughter, by putting his threat of sinking us into execution. At last he ceased firing, and, sweeping up on our quarter, hailed to order the captain of the Delight on board.

"'Our captain is killed, and we have not a boat left that can swim.'

"'Oh, then, if you can't come to me, I must go and fetch you!' A boat, well manned, soon pushed off from the pirates, and in a few minutes dashed alongside of us. The first man who boarded us was the captain, as ferocious-looking a monster as I ever beheld; and his followers, who swarmed up the side after him, were, in appearance, worthy of their leader. They rushed on board with cries of exultation and rage, brandishing their cutlasses, and shouting, 'Down with them!' 'Cut them down, and make an end of them at once!' And they were proceeding to put their threats into execution, when they were checked in a moment by the loud and commanding tones of the captain. 'Stand back, all of you! I'll shoot the first man that lays a hand upon them! No, no, my lads; it would be letting the rascals off too cheap to kill them at once; we'll despatch them in pairs at a time; there are twelve of them, so we shall

have six days' sport instead of one.' This proposal was received with shouts of savage joy by the crew. 'We'll keep these two till the last,' continued he, pointing to the mate and myself, 'that they may have the pleasure of seeing all their comrades walk the plank before them. But, come my lads, be smart; we have no time to lose; put all these fellows on board our little hooker; and then we'll see what's to be done below.' We were all immediately forced into the boat, and rowed on board the brig, where some of us were put in irons, and others lashed to ringbolts on the deck. The boat then returned, and the work of plunder commenced; and for some hours the pirate crew were busily employed in transferring to the brig all the valuables they could lay their hands upon on board the Delight. When they had taken everything available, they scuttled the ship, and left her, and obliged us, with many taunts and blows, to watch for the catastrophe. It was a heartrending sight to us all to see our gallant little ship gradually settling in the water, rolling deep and uneasily, till at last, after a heavy lurch, she dipped her bulwarks low into the water, and, struggling in vain to recover herself, sank to rise no more. A groan of horror burst from us all; we felt as if our last connecting link with humanity was broken; we were left powerless in the hands of monsters in human form, but with the spirit of demons. Alas! our fears were but too well verified: that very evening two of our poor shipmates, after having been tormented in the most savage manner, were blindfolded, and compelled to walk out upon a plank launched from the gangway, from the end of which they fell into the sea, shrieking with horror as they fell. As their bodies plunged heavily into the smooth water, the captain turned to us with a savage sneer, and said—

"'They were too well fed by half; when it comes to your turn, you won't make such a disturbance amongst the fishes.'

"But why need I dwell longer upon these horrors? For five succeeding days, the same murderous scene was enacted; we were fed on bread and water, and tormented in every way that cruelty could suggest, and then had the horror of witnessing the death of our companions, and of anticipating the same cruel fate for ourselves. At last the mate and I were the only survivors, and we were brought to the gangway, to mount the same fatal plank which had been the instrument of death to our unfortunate shipmates. Our eyes were blindfolded, and, weak and exhausted as we were, we looked forward to death as an easy and happy release from our miseries. We bade each other farewell.

"'Our murderers allow us one blessing, Rogers,' said I—'to die together.'

"That remark saved my life.

"'A blessing is it?' exclaimed the captain; 'then it's one that I'll be hanged if you enjoy. You shall go to the devil by yourself. Take the handkerchief off that sentimental gentleman's eyes, and let him see his dear friend take a leap in the dark. He can moralise about it till to-morrow evening.'

"Poor Rogers! I did indeed feel deserted, when the sullen plunge announced that the sea had closed over its prey! To this refinement in cruelty on the part of the pirate, however, I eventually owed my deliverance. Slowly and painfully did the first hours of that night pass over my head. My thoughts constantly recurred to the horrors I had witnessed, and to the dreadful doom that awaited me on the morrow. The tears filled my eyes as I prayed for forgiveness of my past sins, and for strength to support me through the coming trial. The brig was tumbling about on the almost calm sea, with all sails furled, except the topgallantsail, which by some chance had broken adrift, and the crew, not excepting the look-out man, were all

asleep, when all at once the report of a gun came booming over the water. The sound acted like magic upon the slumbering crew—they were on the alert in a moment—the sails were set with wonderful quickness—the sweeps were manned, and the little schooner rippling through the water. Next morning we had distanced the stranger considerably, and the pirate was in great hopes of escaping; but the breeze freshened, and before noon the frigate, for such she proved to be, had gained so much upon us, that her shot began to tell upon us. I was now hurried below, and a sentry was placed over me; the captain ordering him to blow my brains out if I attempted to escape, and adding, 'I'll settle his account by and by.' It was with impatience almost amounting to agony that I listened to the strange medley of sounds which reached my ear—the creaking of the sweeps, the curses and shouts of our crew cheering each other at their work, the loud report of our guns, and the more faint and distant sound of those of the frigate; and I prayed for deliverance—prayed that some lucky ball might find its way into the cabin, and put an end to my suspense and to my miseries at once. At last the sound of the sweeps ceased. I heard the rattling of blocks and the sound of running feet. I felt, by the motion of the vessel, that some alteration was made in her course, and then—I burst into tears—I heard a voice hailing the brig! I felt that the hour of my deliverance was at hand, and I breathed a prayer of silent thankfulness to Heaven. Again there was a movement on deck, the brig laid over to the breeze, and a loud shout burst from her crew, as they discharged the guns. Merciful powers! she had escaped; and my spirit sank within me. But the avenger of blood was behind us, and his voice spoke in the thunder of his guns. I heard a crash upon deck, then the noise of something coming down from aloft, followed by the muttered curses of my sentry, as he exclaimed, 'The gaff is gone!' The report of the

frigate's guns now became louder and louder, and the little brig absolutely staggered, when the grape-shot rattled against her sides. Her crew, however, seemed to be fighting with the desperation of madmen, for they maintained a warm fire. At last all was silent on board; the firing ceased, and not even a voice could be heard. Presently I heard the dash of oars; then the grating of a boat against the vessel's side; then loud and angry voices, and afterwards all the sounds of a desperate conflict. I looked up the companion—my sentinel had deserted his post, to join in the fray. I saw the boat's crew of the frigate engaged in a deadly struggle with the pirates. I rushed over to them, and had just joined them, calling for help, when the pirate captain seized me by the shoulder, and raised his tomahawk to cleave me to the deck. Weak as I was, I must have fallen a victim to his fury, had not a gallant sailor rushed between us, and inflicted a severe wound upon his upraised arm. I saw my brave deliverer fall immediately afterwards by a pistol-shot; but he was well avenged; for the next moment the pirate fell lifeless on his body. I saw no more. I was carried, in a state of insensibility, on board the frigate, and it was long before I recovered from the effects of my severe discipline on board the pirate. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, I wished to hasten homewards immediately; but I was obliged to remain, to give evidence against the crew of the piratical brig, all of whom, with the exception of three or four, suffered the extreme penalties of the law. And now, my dear father, my tale is at an end, and grateful am I to the merciful Providence which has restored me to your arms."

"My dear, dear son!—doubly endeared to me by the dangers you have undergone on my account—I am thankful that my altered fortunes now enable me to gratify what I know to be the dearest wish of your heart. Go to her, John—go to Miss Winterton—she is worthy of you: no

longer restrained by the clog of poverty, you may freely indulge the feelings of your heart."

As the father and son were walking along the road, they saw two men approaching them at some distance.

"Whom have we here?" said John Hamilton.

"One of them is old Willie Duncan, a cottar of mine; and who the lame man is that is with him I know not. By the by, I heard that his son was returned from sea; perhaps that's the man."

Willie Duncan respectfully saluted his master, when he approached, and said—

"I was just bringing my son to ——"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed John Hamilton, gazing earnestly at the disabled man; "it cannot be—yes, it is—my brave deliverer! My gallant fellow," continued he, shaking him heartily by the hand, "how rejoiced I am to see you, and to have an opportunity to prove my gratitude to you! I heard you were dead—how did you escape?"

"Why, blow me, your honour, if you didn't take me quite aback. I couldn't make you out at first—you're twice the man you were when I see'd you on the pirate's deck; and I'd never no thoughts of falling in with you so near home. I'm right glad, however, to see your honour once more."

"Duncan," said Hamilton, senior, with a trembling voice, "I owe you a debt I can never repay. You lost your limb in saving the life of my son—it shall be my endeavour to make the loss to you as light as possible."

"And is the gentleman the son of my father's good master? Then a fig for the leg!—it couldn't have been lost in a better cause. And, as for gratitude, sir, you owe me none; his honour, here, would have done the same for me, if the case had been reversed, like—if he'd been the sailor, and I'd been the gemman."

"Well, well, my good fellow—no doubt—we won't argue

on that point; only tell me how I can serve you, and I will do so, to the best of my ability."

"Why, your honour, I wants for nothing just now. I've got a lot of prize-money, and my father's snug roadstead to anchor in; but, if your honour likes to give me a few ounces of baccy, I won't say but what I'll be obligated to you."

"A modest request, certainly," said Mr Hamilton, laughing; "but we must give you something better than tobacco, and as much of that as you like into the bargain. Come, William, as your son won't speak, you must do so for him. Tell me how I can best serve him."

A whispering consultation here took place between father and son, which was put a stop to by the latter addressing Mr Hamilton in a sheepish, confused manner, twirling his hat in his hands at the same time, and feeling the rim all around, as if to ascertain that it was all there.

"Why, your honour, as your honour's so kind —— Blow'd if I can speak about it, father! You see, your honour, I'm a first-rate hand at a yarn on a Saturday night; but, somehow, my jawing-tacks gets all bedevilled when I begins to speak about *she*."

"And who's she?" said Mr Hamilton, laughing—"some old sweetheart that has been waiting for you?"

"Why, it's bonny Jean Cameron that was when I went away. She's a widow now, your honour, and, as I wants to be spliced, and she's no objection, why, if it's not making too bold, if your honour would let us have one of your empty cottages, we'd join company at once, and sail together for the rest of our cruise."

We need hardly say that the sailor's request was cheerfully granted; and in a few weeks he and his wife were happily settled in a neat cottage, comfortably and substantially furnished by Mr Hamilton, who likewise settled upon him an annuity, sufficient to keep him from want, but not

so large as to encourage habits of idleness or dissipation. John Hamilton was equally successful in his suit; and his union with Ellen Winterton proved that those who have been tried by adversity are best qualified to enjoy prosperity.

THE PROFESSOR'S TALES.

THE THREE BRETHREN.

"Together such as brethren are,
In unity to dwell."

THE unity of the three brethren about whom I am going to speak is complete: some are united in heart and soul, but these are united in body and frame: closer than the Siamese twins did their union abide, till, in an evil hour, the winds smote them, and they were no more—"*Sed stat nominis umbra.*" They have left behind them a name and a record which will not soon perish. They might have said—had speaking been at all their forte—with Horace, "*Non omnis moriar.*" They shall live in the recollection of the present, and in the records of future times—at least it will not be from want of will, if the pages of the "Tales of the Borders" do not transmit their memorial to late posterity. The three brethren! you exclaim, quite naturally enough. What! were they brothers by blood or by marriage—brothers in profession—or, like Simeon and Levi, in iniquity? We should like to see the mist cleared away, and the subject made tangible. Well, listen!

The three brethren were three trees, or rather divisions of one tree—as like each other as one pea is to another—which once stood in the middle of the high road from Glasgow to Dumfries, upon the banks of the Nith. People had it that their similarity was so great that it reached the details of their branches, and even leaves, and that they were in every—even in the minutest—respect copies or fac-similes of each other. Nobody living—and far less any one dead—can tell their age. They saw Oliver Cromwell and his saintly crew

march into Scotland; and beheld, in later times, the Highland host, in the year '45, pass along. They might have given an old chronicle of ancient times and manners, had it not been that they probably did not outlive the age of Methuselah. But

> "Improvisa vis lethi rapuit
> Rapietque gentes."

Destruction came in the shape of a nor'wester, and they are now in the act of being converted into snuff-boxes, writing-desks, and dressing-cases, for their old and attached acquaintances and friends; every one seems more anxious than another to obtain a relic of the immortal triumvirate—and they are more likely to be remembered with pleasurable feelings than even were the Triumvirates of ancient Rome. But now that they have bowed their heads, and given up their roots, it is proper that some effort should be made to perpetuate their memory; and who so fit as an old Closeburn man to execute this bold but praiseworthy task?

The explanation, however, requires a glance at the race of gipsies, one of whom thus characterises the race:—

> "My bonny lass, I work in brass—
> A tinkler is my station—
> I've travell'd round all Christian ground
> In this my occupation.
> I've ta'en the gold—I've been enroll'd
> In many a noble squadron—
> In vain they search'd, when off I march'd,
> To go and clout the caldron."

The gipsies have now disappeared entirely from the north of Scotland; even in Fife, the former residence of the gipsy clan Jamphrey, no such variety of the species is to be found. Their chief residence, as we have had occasion to say before, is now on the Borders, where, in the village of Yetholm, and in Langtown, they still maintain a separate clanship. They still are, and have always been, extremely jealous of

the marriage of any of their daughters, in particular, out of the tribe. Hence the fact, that almost every third person amongst them labours under some mental peculiarity or defect. Their male youths enjoy greater latitude; yet, on their alliance with the Philistine fair, they are usually looked down upon, and regarded as a kind of amphibious race, who, like the "Proselytes of the Gate" amongst the Jews, were not admitted into equal communion. Their children are brought up (at least were so, till of late) in the most religious contempt of the alphabet. Nor are any moral principles inculcated, beyond successful thieving—that is, downright knavery—and dexterity of execution as workmen, whether it be in forming a ram's horn into a cutty spoon, or in appropriating the fattest hens from the farmer's bauks. Their women, too, are expert fortune-tellers, and have husbands ready-made for sixpence. They are a fearful, fearless race, wandering about, in former times, almost during the whole year, and pitching their tents—in other words, setting their asses to graze, and themselves to forage—wherever solitude or the tolerance of the laird or farmer will permit their presence. When Scotland in general, and Dumfries-shire in particular, from Criffell to Corsincon, were densely covered with natural wood, these people divided the woodland with the fox, the boar, and the wolf, and were extremely expert in noosing hares, rabbits, and polecats. Theirs was the bow, and ultimately the long-barrelled gun, for securing the fowls of heaven; and the set line, liester, and fishing-rod for the tenants of the water.

As was the case with the Roman of old—"*Patres ad insignem deformitatem puerum cito necaverunt;*" in other words, and in a different tongue, they put their diseased and deformed offspring to death; and more than one-half of those which were permitted to survive were killed in a year or two by harsh usage, cold, and imperfect clothing.

Thus their youth which did survive these manifold trials and risks rose up into man and womanhood, proud, hardy, strong, well-seasoned plants, exhibiting much muscular power and symmetry in the male, and occasionally uncommon beauty and figure in the female form.

The "wild gazelle exulting" and bounding on the hills of Judah was not more elastic in its motion, nor penetrating and fascinating in its glance, than were many of the fairer wives and daughters of these hordes of part mendicant, part predatory, and part artist wanderers. Their chief resorts, in ancient times, were to the banks of the Hermitage and Slitterick, near Hawick; to the banks of the Dee, near Kirkcudbright; and, above and beyond all, to the woods of Colliston, and the linns of Balachun, on the Nith, in Dumfries-shire; and it is to this last locality that the following narrative particularly refers.

It was about the middle of the month of October that a packman, or pedlar, with an enormous chest laid transverse on his shoulders, was seen wending his way up the banks of the Nith, from Manchester to Glasgow. He had hoped to have reached Thornhill, then an exceedingly small village, before dusk; but this being his first migration in this direction, he found himself so surrounded and obstructed by the river Nith on the one hand, the linns of Balachun on the other, and an almost impenetrable wood in front, that night came upon him, dark and moonless, whilst still pushing his way through brambles, thorns, and every species of tangling and perplexing underwood. At last, despairing of extricating himself, and terrified, at the same time, by the roaring of waters, howling of wild beasts, and hooting of owls, he extricated his shoulders from the pack-bands, and, selecting as dry and soft an apartment as circumstances permitted, he set himself down on the grassy turf, with a birch branch for his canopy, and the old stump of a tree for his lean. In a little time he was alarmed by the cries of

what appeared to be a child in the act of being cruelly murdered. Mungo Clark (for such was the packman's name) rose, and, advancing a few steps in the direction of the now faintly-emitted sounds, found a hare in the act of expiring of strangulation by means of a noose, or girn, formed of strong wire, and placed so as to intercept a little footpath made by the feet of the wild animals of the forest. Mungo was in the act of disengaging the dead creature from its executioner, the noose, when he heard the rustling as if of a lion on the spring, very near him, and all at once he found himself in the iron gripe of a customer with whom he had no wish, on this occasion at least, to deal.

"And wha are ye," were the sounds which, in a hollow and harsh tone, first greeted his ears—"and wha are ye, man, wha hae made yer bed this dark night wi' the howlets and the wull-cats—ye wha meddle wi' what nacthing concerns ye, and burn yer fingers in ither folk's kail-pats? Speak, man, and dinna keep me blethering here, for I hae got ither fish to fry, I trow, than standing here palavering wi' sic as you—come, speak, body, or I'll send ye, pack an' a', sixty yards lower into the bumbling pool o' Balachun Linn."

Mungo Clark was neither soldier nor belted knight, nor was he armed for any deadly conflict; but he was not accustomed to submit without resentment to such rough usage.

"Unhand me, rascal!" was the packman's reply; and making, at the same time, a lateral jerk, he twisted himself fairly out of the assailant's grasp.

A whistle was immediately set up, and in an instant our traveller was surrounded by four strong, ablebodied men, who immediately flashed the light side of a dark lantern full in his face.

"Oh ho!" said one of the newly-assembled assailants; "this is neither the deil, nor the factor, nor the wood-keeper,

nor the old boy, Colliston himsel, but just plain Mungo Clark, Widow Clark o' Penpont's son, who has been at Manchester feathering his pack, for the first time, wi' all manner o' varieties; such as Bibles, psalm-books, ribands, shawls, and waistcoat-pieces. Why, by the flesh-pots o' Yetholm—and that's a terrible oath—we'll adopt Brother Clark into our number, and teach him how to snare game, and spear salmon, instead of drivelling away his time and strength under the pressure of a load" (trying to raise the pack) "which would break the back-bone of an elephant."

The matter appeared to Mungo to be settled without any consent of his, asked or obtained; so, knowing somewhat of the character and habits of this wandering and peculiar race, he was compelled to make a virtue of necessity, and, raising his pack again on his shoulders, to descend with them into the very lowest depths of the linns of Balachun. Even at noonday, on the 23d of June, the Pass, as it is called, is dreary, dark, and dreadful; but now, under the cover of night, and with no other guidance than a small lantern, which scarcely made darkness visible, Mungo hesitated ere he would commit himself to the crossing of a fearful gully, and the walking along the face of a rock, or scaur, scarcely eight inches wide, and overhanging a fearful pool, well known by the terrible appellation of "Hell's Caldron." The party at last arrived at a small grassy plot, encircled on the one side by the roaring stream called Clauchry Burn, and on the other by an amphitheatre of steep, high, and overhanging rocks, fringed and darkened in with brushwood and furze, and guarded, at the upper and lower extremities, by the rocks, which, after receding a little to make room for this grassy retreat, closed in again upon the current, and prevented all *easy* entrance or escape. Soon after Mungo's arrival, he discovered a large kettle, boiling and bubbling, in a crevice of the cliff, suspended from a transverse beam; and beheld around it, now that a parcel of sticks and dry

leaves were kindled, a most picturesque and motley group —women, children, men, boys, and lasses, of all hues, aspects, and sizes, were scattered about in profusion; and, as the flame flashed back from the red sandstone of the linn, their faces glared on Mungo with a demoniac expression. It seemed the very picture of Pandemonium; and yet the hearty laugh, the bold oath, and the occasional inquiry, bespoke the inhabitants to be at least one remove from devils. Mungo was desired to rest him and his load on the apron of the rock, and compelled, without a nay-say, to unstrap his pack, and expose his goods, not (seemingly) for sale, but for plunder. This was not the way, assuredly, to turn the penny to advantage, but what can one say, "*durum telum necessitas!*"—there was no avoiding the spoliation. To be sure, the king, or leader of the gipsy tribe—amounting probably to not less than forty or fifty persons—hinted in his ear that he should not be a loser at last; but, in the meantime, to his no small mortification, he saw his shawls, napkins, stockings, and waistcoat-pieces, making the round of the company without ceremony, and forgetting, like the dove from the ark, to return whence they had fled. The pack having been thus ransacked, and the pot having given audible intimation for some time of its preparatory doings, the king—for such he was—the notorious Donald Faa, with his three sons, Duncan, Cuthbert, and *Donnert* Davie, together with the king's fair daughter, Helen Yetholm Faa, squatted down on the grass, and without the help of forks, made a hearty meal on hares, chickens, turkeys, geese, and half-a-dozen brace of partridges, which might have rejoiced the heart even of a Dominie Sampson. The other members of the community seemed to acknowledge the deputed authority of a young man of good features, and an athletic and genteel appearance, who went by the name of the Squire. After *eating* had had its fair share of devoted and unremitted attention, a barrel, of considerable dimensions, began to make its way downward from

amidst the recesses of this water-worn and excavated rock; and a tub being hurled sideways into the service, boiling water was procured, and sugar in no ordinary quantity commingled; and, by the help of a ladle and several chopin decanters, the whole mass of Egyptian humanity was stirred up into song, laugh, scream, inebriety, quarrel, battle, stupor, and insensibility. Our friend Mungo had no objections whatever to the feast, or to the means by which it was prolonged. He was afterwards notorious for his drinking habits, insomuch that his observation on this occasion is still repeated in the neighbourhood of the place of his nativity. When questioned by the king respecting the size of his native village, Penpont, his reply was—"It is an exceeding great city." This being questioned, his proof was equally ingenious, and descriptive of his habits—"Why, Nineveh took Jonah three days to travel through it, whereas Penpont generally takes me *seven*." He referred manifestly to his habit of stopping and drinking at every petty inn and public-house in the village! The jest told exceedingly in his favour. Mungo, however, in spite of his losses and crosses, had a noble night of it, as he afterwards said, with the gipsies, and awakened next morning from his grassy couch to cool his aching temples in the stream, and restore his stomach by a hair of the dog that had bit him. He then observed that the two sons, Duncan and Cuthbert, but not Davie (yclept Donnert, from his peculiarity of mental constitution), were absent, and that their father not only exhibited no surprise respecting his sons' absence, but refused to give any account to his guest of the cause of it. Meanwhile, Mungo had an opportunity of marking the appearances of the various objects around him somewhat more distinctly than he had been able to do on the preceding evening. Blankets, supported by forked poles, old clothes and rags of every description, formed a kind of nightly shelter for the common herd; whilst the royal head reposed in the

midst of his male progeny, on the lap of a projecting rock, with a few hare-skins for his pillow, and a corn-sack for his coverlet. His fair daughter's bedchamber was somewhat more removed beyond a projecting corner of the winding linn, and she was protected from observation by the branches of the overhanging trees being drawn closely down over her, and by what had once, in all probability, been a soldier's tent, but which was now miserably rent, and unweather-worthy. It was manifest that this child was the darling and care of a fond father; for she was not only provided in a superior manner, but, by the position of his own sleeping apartment, she was protected from all intercourse with the other members of the tribe. Honest nature! thou art too many, even for a gipsy life; and even here parental affection hallowed and refined what was unseemly and revolting. I say revolting; for, in an obscure corner, and under the shelter of a hazel-bush, lay a figure, emaciated with disease, and probably with dissipation and crime, groaning in agony, and regarded with no more sympathy by the great mass of the tribe than if he had been a strangled hare or a mangled horse. There was something indeed terrible in this sight. True, Helen Faa did all that she was permitted, but that was but little, to alleviate his sufferings; but death was in his eye and in his throat—he made one great effort to rise, grasped a branch convulsively, and ceased to live. Mungo would willingly have retired, even with the losses he had sustained, but he was not permitted—probably because old Donald conjectured that information would be immediately lodged against him, and he would be compelled to relinquish one of his strongest holds in the south of Scotland. Meantime, Mungo had an opportunity of beholding more closely the female portion of this society; and was exceedingly struck—for he was yet a young man and unmarried—with the really handsome faces and well-formed persons which characterised the whole; but far and away above all

the rest shone Miss Helen Yetholm Faa—for thus was she designated by the clan—in the pride of health, youth, and black, or rather brown, eyes—those weapons of female onset which are sharper than a twō-edged sword, as Mungo used to sing or say afterwards, in a song which he composed on the occasion:—

> "They were jet, jet black, and like a hawk,
> And wadna let a body be."

All this seemed to be fully appreciated by the Squire, who evidently paid the young princess particular attention, and seemed, at the same time, sufficiently jealous of any foreign interference with the object of his attention. Donnert Davie was a stout, ill-made, squint-eyed being, who stammered in his speech, and seemed particularly useful in carrying on the culinary operations, under the direction of Helen, in the retreat. He felled wood for the fire, carried water to the kettle, heated cow and sheep horns in the flame; brought round about and close to the operator old pots, pans, and trenchers, which had been obtained to be clouted, clasped, and mended. He was, in short, a kind of gipsy factotum; and when "the house affairs did not call him thence," he would associate with the stranger, stammering out such incoherent inquiries as—"Whare been?—What do?—What do?—Mother dead?—Mother dead?—Yes—yes—yes—true—true—true"—muttering to himself, and repeating the same monosyllable half-a-dozen times. His sister Helen was manifestly kind to him, and would not permit any of the company to insult or ill-use him.

Night arrived, but with it not Duncan or Cuthbert; and it was not till late on the following evening that they made their appearance, and with them came silver and gold in abundance: consequently Mungo Clark's claims were satisfied; and he was informed that, next morning, as they were all about to decamp, he might pursue his journey homewards; but about the following dawn, an authoritative voice

from the top of the precipice summoned the whole party to a surrender. One figure stood prominently forward, looking over the rock; and Donnert Davie, whose blunderbuss always lay charged beside him, immediately fired, and the figure came tumbling down headlong, and sunk in the yawning abyss of boiling water. In a word, the whole party, after a most determined resistance, were taken prisoners by a military party obtained from Dumfries; and it being proved against Duncan and Donald Faa that they had stolen some cattle from Dalswinton Mains, and sold them on the sands of Dumfries—as also against Donnert Davie, that he had shot the serjeant who commanded on the occasion—the whole three brothers were tried, condemned, and sentenced to be executed, *in terrorem*, near the spot where their depredations had been committed. As there were three persons to execute, and the famous tree already referred to had three branches, they appeared to the sheriff to be destined for each other; and accordingly all the three were hung at the same time on the same tree, which has ever since retained the appellation of "The Three Brethren."

Old Donald, his fair daughter, Mungo Clark, Squire Cockburn, and the rest, were set at liberty; but the gipsies were conveyed by a military escort across the Borders; and I have been given to understand that the Squire, who was the young laird of Glenae, after considerable opposition from the old father, was married to fair Helen Yetholm Faa; and that he was the happy husband of the fair dame who used afterwards to go about the country in disguise, attending in gipsy garb at weddings, kirns, and merry-meetings, and giving origin to the well-known reel—"Auld Glenae."

THE MISTAKE RECTIFIED.

"Now," said the traveller, as he wandered up one of those retired Highland glens, which characterise and beautify the

Grampian range, "I shall once more visit my dear father and mother; and my sister, now woman grown; and, what is more, my sweet Helen M'Donald, who used to gather the mountain berries along with me, and pursue the little kids and lambs. Ah, Helen was only about thirteen years old when I left; she will now be eighteen; a full-grown beautiful woman, I have no doubt. I wonder if old Andrew, her grandfather, be still living; he used to tell me such tales of Prince Charlie, and Prestonpans, and Culloden, that my hair yet almost stands erect at the recollection of them. And then there was Euphemia M'Gregor, his son's wife, the mother of my dear Helen; and Oscar and Fingal, my father's faithful attendants and servants: and we had such fun during the long winter nights, when the sheep were in a place of safety, and the door was barred, and the peat-fire was burning clear, and the very cat and kitten enjoyed the cheery fireside—such questions and commands, such guessing and forfeiting, and riding round the fire on a besom, and holding one's mouth full of water to discharge on the person's face who should first laugh at our grotesque gestures and looks: but night is approaching whilst I linger by the way—my whole heart heaves to behold once more the sweet home of my youth and innocence."

Thus said, or thought aloud, a young man, seemingly about twenty-two years of age, as he ascended Glen —— and approached the thatched shieling which stood on the margin of a small mountain stream, which wended its mazes along the tortuous glen. He had been five years, come the time, absent from his mountain home, and had, during that period, endured and encountered a variety of fortune. He sung as he went along—

> "A light heart and thin pair of breeches,
> Goes through the world, brave boys!"

switching the bent and heather-bells with his cane, and treading with a step as elastic as was his bosom. At last,

just as the sun was tinging with his departing ray the top of the highest mountain in the neighbourhood, he turned the corner of a projecting rock, and came at once into full and distinct view of his home. It was then grey twilight, and objects began to assume an indistinct appearance. Walking by the side of the stream, as if meditating, there appeared a figure wrapped up in a Highland plaid. It immediately struck the young sailor that this was his sister; and in order to give her what is called an agreeable surprise, he stepped aside unperceived by her, and stood concealed behind a projecting cliff, which the stream had stripped bare of soil in its passing current. The figure came nearer and nearer, and then, sighing deeply, uttered some sound, which his ear could not catch. At last, tears and sobs followed, and he heard the words most distinctly pronounced —"Alas, I can never truly love him! I shall be the most wretched of women! But he whom I loved as angels love —oh, he, my own dear William M'Pherson, is dead and gone, and I can never see him more."

"But you can though, my own dear Helen;" and in an instant he held her lifeless and motionless in his arms. She had uttered just one awful scream, which was re-echoed by the surrounding cliffs, and had ceased to feel or know anything connected with the living world. Alas! she was dead, and he was distracted. He ran to the house, calling aloud for help; but every one of its inmates, even the mother who bore him, fled from his presence, uttering ejaculations, intimating the greatest terror at his presence. In vain did he protest with tears—I am your son and no other— I am Willie M'Pherson, your lost boy! His words bore no conviction along with him. Avaunt, foul fiend! Avaunt, in the name of God and the Holy Trinity—trouble me not —trouble me not; my dear child is in heaven; and thou, foul spirit, art permitted for a time to assume his shape. His sister, too, was equally incredulous, and his father had

not yet returned from the hill. What was to be done? Helen M'Donald was in all probability dead, or dying, helpless and alone, and yet no one would come to her assistance. At last, Oscar and Fingal made their appearance in advance of his father; and though they barked at first upon his naming them, they immediately ran up to him, and jumped upon his back, his neck, his head, his whole person. They seemed in as much danger of expressing joy as poor Helen had been of dying of fearful surprise.

"Stand back," said the delighted and believing father to his wife, who absolutely clung to his knees to prevent his advance—"stand back, woman; d'ye think Fingal and Oscar would caress the foul fiend in that manner? Na—na—na. Ha! ha! ha!" And he fell upon his son's shoulders, weeping and crying convulsively.

"My father—my dear, dear father."

"My son—my lost, my only, my restored son," was the response.

But Helen, in an instant, brought the whole party, consisting of father, mother, sister, and son, to her aid: a light was procured and held over her face; her bosom was bared, and rubbed; her forehead had water plentifully poured upon it from the stream; and, at last, symptoms of returning life appeared. Oscar and Fingal, in the meantime, had licked Helen's face, and neck, and shoulders, all over; and whether from any virtue in the peculiar touch of their tongues, or from the natural expiry of the trance, Helen breathed heavily—her bosom heaved; William looked on her cheeks, and they were flushed with red. In a moment he had her in his arms. Helen, for some time, suffered exquisite bodily torture; but was at last capable of having the truth made gradually known to her. She said surely she had been dreaming, as she had often done, and that she was still surely asleep, and that she would waken at last, as she had done before, to a dreadful percep-

tion of the reality. William M'Pherson still continued to clasp and assure Helen of his personal identity. But, even when convinced of the reality of William's presence, Helen did not evince that degree of happiness which might have been expected; she sat stupified and passive, and seemingly insensible to everything around her; her mind was evidently wandering to a disagreeable subject. However, she was prevailed upon to return with the family into the house, and, worn out and fatigued, she was soon after put to rest in an adjoining apartment.

In the meantime, the young sailor was questioned minutely respecting the reason of his reappearance, after he had been so long reported, and believed by everybody, to be dead.

Without repeating his answer in his own words, which were interlarded with sea phrases, we may state, in general, that it was to the following purpose:—He had gone to Dundee, with the view of making some small purchases for the household, when he accidentally fell in with a recruiting party, who were beating up for marines for the fleet, then just returned from the capture of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen. Inexperienced as he was, he was enticed into a public-house on the shore, and awakened, after a stupor of some hours, on board a British man-of-war. In a few hours, he was conveyed out to sea, along with several others, and was conveyed immediately to Spithead. Having it ultimately put to his choice whether he would stand by a gun, or handle a musket and a sabre, he chose the former, and was regularly entered as an ablebodied seaman on board His Majesty's ship the Victory. In her, along with Admiral Nelson, he sailed for the West Indies, and then crossed the Atlantic, back to the shores of France. The enemy still eluding the eagle-eye of Lord Nelson, he sailed for the Mediterranean, and, after various landings and inquiries, came upon the French fleet, moored closely

inland on the coast of Egypt, at the mouth of the Nile. He was in the dreadful battle of the Nile, and assisted in rescuing several who were blown up, but not killed, in the L'Orient. After the battle, he had promotion, and ultimately prize-money, on account of his brave and humane conduct, and sailed again for Naples, and latterly in quest of the Spanish fleet on the coast of Spain. He was close by Nelson when he was shot by a rifleman from the mast of the ship with which he had grappled, and saw the fellow who did the deed drop on the deck, being shot through the heart by a marine on board of Lord Nelson's ship. After the battle, he was returned to Plymouth, having been wounded in the leg—a musket-ball had passed through the flesh, and somewhat, but not greatly, injured the bone. He spent some months in the hospital, and was then despatched to the coast of France on board the Spitfire. There he had distinguished himself in cutting out and burning several of the enemy's craft at Havre; and being again wounded, though slightly, in the arm, he was put upon the pension list, and allowed to dispose of himself till his country should again require his services. In these circumstances, he began to think of his home; and, with some hundreds of pounds in the bank, and a pension order of about two shillings and sixpence a-day in his pocket, he arrived at Dundee in a sailing vessel, and was on his way to his *native glen* when the reader first became acquainted with him. When this narrative was finished, his father retired for an instant, and then appeared with some papers, which he had extracted from his private depositories. He first read a letter which purported to come from a king's officer, who signed himself William Wilson, and who informed his afflicted father that his son had been induced to go on board a king's ship, to see the arrangements which it exhibited; but that, in passing from the small boat to the deck, he had missed a foot, and been drowned. The letter was dated on board the

spitfire; and mentioned, likewise, that the ship was under sailing orders for the general rendezvous at Spithead. The poor distracted parent had come to Dundee, but could obtain no information of his son—only, about three months after, he heard that a dead body, severely mutilated, had been thrown out upon the sands of St Andrews; and, on account of the state of its decomposition, had immediately been interred in Christian burial-ground. A second pilgrimage to St Andrews was undertaken by the father and daughter; but nothing satisfactory was discovered, except that the corpse exhibited marks of having been dressed in a blue-and-white striped waistcoat, which answered to that in which he had left Denhead, his home in the Highlands. After this last discovery, all further inquiry ceased, and the afflicted family fulfilled the period of their sincere mourning, and things returned nearly to their usual bearing. But, when father, and mother, and sister had seemingly got over the worst of their grief, Helen M'Donald still pined in silence over the recollections of her early companion; and as she expanded into womanhood, her grief seemed to grow "with her growth;" and her father became extremely anxious to have Helen properly and creditably disposed of in marriage.

The son of a small proprietor in the neighbourhood had lately become laird himself; and, though far exceeding Helen in years, having had frequent opportunities of seeing her, particularly at church on Sabbath, he had become enamoured of so much beauty and innocence. Proposals had been made to the father, which were immediately accepted; and the young lady had been dealt with, as young ladies in such situations generally are, by arguments of interest, and worldly comfort, and even grandeur. First impressions are deep (oh, how deep!); and Helen could not yet entirely exclude the image of her beloved William from her recollection. Laird M'Wharry was urgent in his suit—her father, whom she affectionately loved, was troubled

and anxious—her mother, too, pressed home upon her attention prudential considerations—so, after long delays and many internal struggles, Helen at last consented to become, but not till some months afterwards, Mrs or Lady M'Wharry, as the peasantry styled the laird's wife. It was during her visit (previous to her marriage) to M'Wharry that the incident took place which thus connects our narrative, and brings us up to the point of time when William M'Pherson arrived at Denhead.

William, learning from Helen, as well as from his father and mother, how matters were situated, suddenly disappeared, and left no means of tracing the place of his retreat. Days, and even weeks, passed, but no letter arrived, and no message came. In the meantime, the day appointed for the marriage approached, and Helen seemed to have made up her mind to submit to necessity; at least she tried to look cheerful, and put as good a face upon it as many tears, shed in private, would permit.

Laird M'Wharry was a true Highlander—he had much of that clannish feeling which is peculiar to the Celt. He was, besides, exceedingly passionate, and had more than once got into trouble from having used hasty and unguarded expressions. Nay, he had once been prosecuted in the Court of Session, and damages had been obtained to a considerable amount, by one of his servants, or rather slaves, whom he had beat most unmercifully. In attending a Perth market, he had occasion to ride homewards, after dark, with a brother proprietor, who had lately bought an estate in his neighbourhood. This proprietor could not boast a Celtic name or origin. He was plain Mr Monnipenny, from the town of Kirkcaldy, in Fife. They had both been drinking during the course of the day, and were, therefore, more liable to get into some dispute or quarrel. M'Wharry began by deprecating Mr Monnipenny's horse, whose character the master supported with some warmth; so,

to settle the matter, they both set off at the gallop, and the fire flashed from the horses' heels as they passed through Dunkeld. Unfortunately for Laird M'Wharry, however, about a mile beyond the above town, the saddle-girth gave way, and he came to the ground head foremost. He was dead when Mr Monnipenny came up with him. He had suffered a concussion of the brain; and, notwithstanding that medical aid was immediately obtained from Dunkeld, nothing could be done.

Poor Helen M'Pherson really mourned his fate; for, though she had no love for him, she had brought herself to think that it was her duty to fulfil her promise. But where was he whom her young heart held in its core? No one knew—no one could tell. Helen had inwardly resolved to live single on his account, even if no further accounts were received of William M'Pherson. But her father in the meantime died of a fever; and her mother was compelled to remove from the farm to the village of Dunkeld, where, in order to support herself and her lovely daughter, she set up a little shop with a small sum which her husband and she had saved, and was highly respected by all who knew her. In the meantime, the parish schoolmaster, an excise officer, and a wealthy sheep-farmer, all solicited Helen's hand; but she lent a deaf ear to all these offers, still thinking, and speaking, and dreaming about her William.

One day, when she was standing at the shop-door, she observed a crowd gathered about a horse and gig, out of which a person had just been thrown, and was taken up as was feared lifeless. Helen, from motives of humanity, rushed into the crowd to make inquiries, and saw the person carried into an adjoining apothecary's shop; there he was immediately bled, and, to the infinite satisfaction of all, had begun to recover. The fact turned out to be, that he had been stunned by the fall on his head, but no concussion or fracture had taken place. The gentleman, she

learned, had been put to bed, but was mighty unruly, as he insisted upon pursuing his journey that very evening into the Highlands; and a post-chaise, with two horses and a steady driver, had been brought to the apothecary's door, and the traveller was passing into it, with his head and arm tied up, when all at once Helen uttered a scream, and stood trembling betwixt him and the conveyance. It was her own William, returned from sea—to which he had again fled—and making all despatch to reach Denhead, as he had learned, on his way towards the Highlands, the fate that had overtaken the bridegroom, Laird M'Wharry. Now, reader, you and I part—I can do no more for you; for, if you cannot far better conceive than I can describe what followed, you can be no reader of mine—you will never have perused the story at all. William was now comfortably circumstanced, pensioned, and dismissed the service; and the last time I had a week's fishing at Amalrie, I spent my evenings and nights under his roof. He is now, like myself, a grandfather; and Helen, though not quite so young as she was some thirty or forty years ago, is still in my mind a perfect beauty, and has blessed her husband, during a pretty long life, with all that kind husbands can expect or obtain by marriage. She has made him a happy father, and a fond, foolish, indulgent grandpapa.

DURA DEN; OR, SECOND THOUGHTS ARE BEST.

I took my way, a few days ago, fishing-rod in hand, from Cupar in Fife, by Dura Den, up towards the healthy and sequestered village of Ceres. Dura Den was once romantic and secluded. Its brawling stream, which empties the waters of the upper basin into the Eden, leaped and tumbled over igneous, and penetrated its way through aqueous, formations, till it mingled into rejoicing union with the lovely Eden immediately under the old towers of Spottiswood, and the fine Gothic church of Dairsie. This deep

and beautifully-winding ravine was covered from rock to rock, on each successively sunny side, by trees of various name and leaf, from the scented sloe and hawthorn, up to the hazel, the birch, and the oak. It was a perfect aviary during the spring months. A few wild deer browsed amidst recesses, and various love-smitten maids and men repaired to this retreat, to talk of many things which were only interesting to themselves. The soft projecting sandstone rocks had been water-run into caves and recesses; and in some of these report had fixed the residence, for a night at least, of the famous Balfour of Burley, after the affair of Magus Muir.* It is not, however, to this, but to a more recent occurrence, that I am now about to solicit your attention, after, however, premising the change which has now been wrought upon this once rural, secluded, romantic, lovely spot. At the very entrance, there stands a bone-mill, grinding, with grating activity and horrible crunch, into powder the mingled bones of man and beast. You have scarcely escaped from the horrible jarring sound of the modern ogre, than you come full plump upon a spinning-mill, with as many windows as there are days in the year. There it stands bestriding the valley like a colossus, and commanding all the collected energies of the once pure and solitary stream. Bless me! how it thunders: the very rocks seem to shake under the whirl of the tremendous machinery; whilst at every open window out flies in clouds the imprisoned dust and stour. A single door opens, and the sound maddens on your ear into a screwing torture. It shuts again. You are greatly relieved by the compressed and imprisoned horror. A little further up this once delightful den, a pillar of smoke shoots out on the eye, like an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. This is an evidence that (as in the formation of this globe) fire has been called upon to

* A sword has lately been discovered in one of the caves, rusted and broken—probably once the sword of Burley!—19th Oct., 1839.

assist water. Again and again, another and another hulking dirty erection fixes its hideous trail in the lovely localities, till the landscape still onwards opens upon green fields, all covered and whitened over, *not* with daisies, but with *yarn*, which has just been removed from the vitriolic vat. I had essayed here and there to fish, but had not even a nibble. A little factory urchin, who saw my mistake, immediately accosted me with—

"Ye needna fish here about, sir, for the fish are a' dead."

"What has *deaded* them?" said I.

"Oh! I dinna ken, except maybe it's the vitriol—they dinna tak wi' the vitriol ava."

"No wonder," thought I. "I suspect neither you nor I would tak weel with such a beverage." So I at once rolled in my line, put up my rod, and was on the eve of returning, somewhat disappointed, from my forenoon's ramble, when my attention was attracted by an old, though fresh-looking man *in his* "*cruda viridisque senectus*," who was sitting on a bench in the sunshine, betwixt the door and the window of one of those very neat and cleanly cottages, which have been erected for the convenience and accommodation of the mill-spinners, and which, from the name of the spirited proprietor, has been called "Yoolfield."

"James," said the old man—"come here, James, and tell me what's that ye waur saying to the gentleman."

"Ou, I was only telling him there waur nae trouts, except *stane anes*,* here."

In the meantime, I had approached the old man's seat, and thinking that he motioned me to be seated, I at once took my place, as if I had been an old acquaintance, by his side. It turned out that he was the grandfather of this urchin, who in a few minutes reappeared with a face of

* *Vide* recent discoveries of extinct species of fish found in this den. "Fife Illustrated." Glasgow: James Swan.

great comfort and vigorous health; "*causa erat in aperto*" —he had dined.

"Ye'll be a stranger hereaboots, I mak nae doubt?" said the old man.

I replied that I had been so for some time past; that I had stopped, on my way north, a day in Cupar, in order to revisit this romantic retreat; but that it was now sadly changed, and I had not the heart to pursue my walk any further. I miss, added I, everything which I expected to see: the solitude, the green banks, the trees, the pure waters, the yellow trouts, the all of innocence and nature by which this den was marked, ere these vile spinning-jennies had entered, with noise, confusion, and defilement in their train.

"And so," said the aged Nestor, "ye are up in arms against the late erections, because ye canna get an hour or twa's fishing, nor pursue your own fancies about solitude, and innocence, and that! I will tell ye, my good sir—for ye're but a bairn in comparison wi' me—that had ye experienced what I hae experienced, ye wad hae blessed the day which converted this solitary and useless den into a source of comfortable living to hundreds of families, who might otherwise be starving at home, or banished from all that they hold dear into a foreign land."

"Grandfather," hereupon said a fine rosy girl about fourteen, "dinner's ready: will ye come in, or will I bring it out to you?"

"I think," said the ancient patriarch, "I'll just rest whar I am; it's a bonny sunny day, and the den is a' loun and sheltered. Just bring out the broth and the wee bit Irish stew here, and maybe this gentleman, now tired wi' nae fishing, will no scorn to tak a spoonfu' and a bit alangside o' a puir auld body."

I immediately assured my kind host that I had provisions in my basket, which I soon disengaged, together with

a flask containing a sufficiency of old Nantz. To it, therefore, we set, exchanging viands: I partaking of the excellent and savoury stew, and he of a wee drap, only a very wee drap, of the brandy. Like Sir Walter Scott's minstrel, the soul of the old yet vigorous Trojan waxed strong within him; and, after having duly returned thanks to the Giver of all good, he drew me close to his elbow, and proceeded thus:—

"Indeed, sir, I'm now considerably upwards of eighty years—the period at which the psalmist says the strength of man is but grief and labour; but I haena found it sae, for a' my griefs and labours were confined to the earlier pairt o' my life, and no to the latter day—His name be praised for the same."

I instinctively answered "Amen;" and, partly encouraged by this, and partly by an additional pull at the brandy-flask, the old man pursued his egotism.

"Well, ye see, ye are against spinning-jennies and large manufactures, ye say; but they are the freends o' the puir, sir—the blessed supporters o' thousands and millions in these lands.* You shall hear; for, as you seem to have time on your hands, I will, for your father's sake" (I had made him acquainted with my descent from a worthy clergyman in the north), "unfold to you my whole history, and that of my children, up to this hour:—

"My name, sir, is Donald Sutherland. I belong originally to the county of that name; and I was bred a farmer on the estates of the Duchess of Sutherland. But there was neither duke nor duchess then, oh dear!" (Hereupon the old man absolutely cried; having, however, checked himself by observing that he was an old fool, he again proceeded):—"I had, as I said, a small sheep-farm, of about one thousand acres, in the western district of that county. I see, sir, you

* Very different this deliverance from that of Mrs Trollope in her "Factory Boy."

are surprised at my saying *small;* but, sir, when land is let at a shilling an acre, as it was in my day, such a farm is but small—a thousand shillings, ye ken, is just fifty pounds o' yearly rent: and that was my rent at *Edderachills,* near by Loch Assynt. I am now, as ye see, an auld man, and a grey; but I was ance young, and stout, and foolish too, nae doobt. I thought naething wad war me, sae I just married whan I was a young, inexperienced callan, about nineteen; and, having got a brother of my puir father's to be security (ye see my puir father was only a hind on the estate o' Sutherland, and had neither money nor credit), I took my dear Helen M'Roy home to no that ill a bigging—wi' a hantle o' blankets, a peat-fire, a herd callan, and twa as canny and sensible dogs as ever followed a herd, or turned a hirsel. Aweel, ye ken, Helen and me war very happy, for we loved each other dearly; we had been acquainted frae the time we could climb a brae or eat a cranberry; and things went on no that ill ava. We had twa bairns in the course o' twal years, a lassie, and a fine lad, wha was drowned, as ye shall hear; but oh my heart is sair whan I think o't. It was one awful night in the month of January. A vessel had stranded in Loch Assynt. The men were seen, through a stormy moonshine, hanging to the topmast, which, however, went from side to side, with a fearful swing. At every turn or jerk, another and another human being was plunged into the roaring foam. My son Archibald, my shepherd, and I, pushed from the shore in a fishing-boat, which was lying high and dry—we heard the fearful screams of perishing men—we rowed off at all hazards, but had not neared the vessel, when our boat fairly swamped. We were still, however, within wading depth, and with difficulty regained our feet and the boat. We again pushed hard from land, and at last came under the lee of the wreck. My son was young, active, and daring; and, in order to ascertain how matters were, or what remained of the deck, he caught a rope, and leaped on board.

In an instant, a young man, a passenger, with his wife and child, were slung, as it were, miraculously on board our little boat. The waves went up in spouting foam betwixt the wreck and the boat, and then subsiding, heaved us with a tremendous crash against the side of the vessel; and I remember no more till I awoke to misery, in a kelp hut by the sea-shore. I found that my son, with the woman and child, had perished; but that the husband, my shepherd, and myself, had been cast ashore, and with difficulty resuscitated. My grief and his mother's grief were loud and severe. But 'what cannot be cured must be endured.' The stranger was a native of Fife, who had been to America on a mercantile speculation, and having married at New York, and become a father, was on his way towards Kirkcaldy, his native place, when this dreadful accident occurred. He had lost all his effects, and some money in the wreck, and was content to take part of my humble dwelling for a season. In the meantime, my lease expired, and another proprietor had arisen, who knew not Donald Sutherland. The rent offered by my next and more wealthy neighbour was far above what I would think of promising, so I behoved to leave sweet Edderachills, with all its heath, and moss, and muir, for a sea-shore appointment in the manufacturing of kelp from sea-weed—at that time a very flourishing employment in the West Highlands in particular. The stranger about this time took his departure, but not without many promises of returning again to visit the grave of his wife and child, and to renew his acquaintance with my wife, my daughter, and myself. For a time the kelp concern did pretty well; we had good and regular payment for the article, and an increasing demand; and we contrived to live at least as comfortably as we had done as sheep-farmers. But man is always finding out inventions; a method was devised of dispensing, by means of a chemical discovery, with our kelp entirely; and we were suddenly and entirely ruined.

It was at this period that I, in a manner, *cursed*, like you, the spirit of discovery and invention. I was disgusted by the change which the progress of science had made, and I did not know how to turn myself for a bare subsistence. In this situation of affairs, my daughter Nelly within there (pointing to the door) was courted by a neighbouring sheep-farmer's son, of a somewhat disreputable character, but of considerable reputed wealth. This was a sad trial to us all; for, though the marriage might have benefited us somewhat, in a worldly point of view, we did not like to see our blooming and virtuous child sacrificed, it might be, to the momentary feelings of a known deceiver. Nelly could not bear the thoughts of such a union; and one night she told her lover as much. In consequence of this unfortunate affair, we were very soon after turned out of house and hold—the old farmer having contracted with the proprietor for the huts and steadings which had once been peopled with busy and prosperous hands, but which now were nearly empty. Baser proposals than before were made by the degraded and vindictive young man; and we set off, one moonlight night, across the hills, for the town of Dornoch. We were three wanderers in the wilderness—my wife Helen, my daughter Nelly, and myself. I was still comparatively strong, and was determined to work, but could find no employment. For days we slept (for the weather was fine) on the heath, and lived on what little of our means yet remained. I was resolved, come what might, that I would not beg. My wife and daughter bore up amazingly; for we trusted that our God—the God of the hills, as well as of the valleys; of the poor and the outcast, as well as of the rich and provided—would not forget us. I found temporary work, at last, in a stone quarry, and occupied a hut close upon the sea-shore. This, to us all, was luxury; for it was independence. Contentment *kitchened* labour, and we slept soundly in our poverty and innocence. But this, I saw, could not long

continue; my strength was not equal to this severe labour, to which I was unaccustomed; so I persuaded, not without difficulty, my wife and daughter to accompany me to Canada, to which the Countess of Sutherland was then offering a free passage from Cromarty Frith, in the good ship Aurora. I should, however, have mentioned that, whilst residing at Dornoch, I had observed the son of a neighbouring proprietor—a somewhat smart-looking gentleman—frequently passing our door, and sometimes conversing with my wife and daughter; but I took no notice of the affair, as I felt secure in the virtue and prudence of both parties. No proposals, honourable or otherwise, were made to my daughter, and I conceived the matter to be at an end. On the day of the ship's sailing, we were all on the quay, and ready to embark. My wife and I had entered the boat, and were waiting for my daughter, who had been sent by us on a message to a shop. She did not return in time for the boat in which we were conveyed to the Aurora; but we were told by the sailors that she would probably arrive in the next. One boat, however, arrived, but our dear Nelly was not in it; another came, but with it no daughter. Meantime the ship was under sail, and the captain said he would not lose the favourable breeze for all the girls in Scotland. My dear wife was inconsolable, and I petitioned hard to be let out, even on one of the Western Isles; but the weather was exceeding stormy, and we kept as far as possible from land. 'God,' said I to my grieving partner, 'will protect Nelly; for she is good and virtuous. God can be father and mother, and more than all that, to those who fear and obey him.' We landed at Quebec, and maintained ourselves for some time—I acting as a kind of shore-porter, and my wife assisting in assorting furs in a great warehouse. But our means were but small; so we bethought us of removing more inland. So we arrived ultimately at Montreal, where I had the good fortune to

meet with a distant relative in pretty good circumstances. He had long been engaged in a mercantile house, and had now obtained a considerable and a profitable share in it. He immediately found employment for me as a warehouse servant, whilst my wife washed and dressed for himself and a few friends. Year after year passed by, and many a letter did we write to Edderachills and Dornoch; but we received no answer. At last it pleased God to remove my dear Helen by death; and my friend having resolved to remove to Kirkcaldy, his native place, I took shipping with him in the ship St John, and we arrived off the Land's End in safety. But it came on to blow dreadfully from the north and the east, as we rounded the island; and one dark night in the month of November we struck upon a rock in the neighbourhood of Ely. The ship fired signals of distress, and a boat came out, which saved the passengers and crew; but the ship and cargo were lost. What was my surprise, upon arriving at the inn, to find, in the person of one of the boatmen, the shipwrecked stranger, Sam Rogers, who had lodged so long with us at Edderachills. He insisted upon my immediately repairing to his cabin, as he termed it, on the shore, with the view of introducing me to his wife and a large family of children.

"'Have you ever heard,' continued he, after we were seated, 'anything of your daughter Nelly?'

"'Not a word,' said I, eagerly. 'Have you?'

"'Would you know her,' continued he, 'if you were again to see her?'

"'Know her,' said I; 'to be sure I would—her image is ever before me. I see her, at this moment, as plainly as if she were still alive. Oh! what—horrible!—stand off!—stand off! Do these old eyes deceive me, or art thou indeed my own darling, lost child?' said I; whilst Nelly—the real flesh-and-blood Nelly—clasped me to her arms, and burst into a flood of tears.

"'My father!—my father!' she exclaimed, whilst the young ones gathered around us in stupid amazement; and my son-in-law, Sam Rogers, rubbed his hands and flapped his arms in perfect delight. It was indeed my dear Nelly, in the person of Helen Rogers, the still handsome mother of seven children.

"But, Helen, I say—Helen, set down the bairn a wee bit, and tell this honest gentleman the Dornoch story, ye ken."

"Hout," said Helen, "I hae nae time, father, to enter into a' the outs and ins o' thae langsyne tales; besides, I see Sam waving me up to the mill—I'm wanted, father, an' ye maun look after the bairn till I come back again."

Being foiled in his wish to set his daughter's tongue agoing to the tune of her own adventures, the old man placed the child on the greensward in front of the cottage, and, after once more paying his respects to my brandy-flask, proceeded as follows:—

"Weel, the lassie disna like to hear me tell the story; I ken she aye blushes at bits o't; but now that she's awa, I may just as weel finish, by letting ye know that the scamp wha had seen, and fallen in love, as he called it, with her at Dornoch, had watched her down to the beach, and having hired some accomplice in the person of one of the sailors, had her misdirected in the first place, and lifted off her feet in the second, and placed beside the well-known gentleman in a post-chaise, which drove off immediately in an inland direction. In vain were all her struggles and entreaties. The young blackguard immediately proceeded to inform her that her struggles and her shouts were of no avail; that he could not promise her marriage, as he was already engaged, to please his mother; but he would give her love in abundance, and a cottage residence, which he had provided for her on his father's property, at no great distance. It was in vain for her to resist; but she had resolved rather to die than to yield to his wishes; so, when they had arrived at the centre

of an extensive plantation, he caused her to alight, and dismissing, as it was now nearly dark, the chaise and driver, proceeded to conduct her, as he said, on foot to the cottage which he had provided. He half dragged her a few paces from the road, or rather track through the wood, and, unveiling all at once the fiend within him, proceeded to open and undisguised violence. But, sir," said the old man, with emphasis, "he thought himself alone, but he was not alone —God saw him, and had marked his proceedings; and God sent a deliverer, in the person of him owre by yonder" (pointing to the mills). "God sent Sam Rogers, with a guid oak plank, to free the captive, and make the captor flee for his life: in short, sir—for I fear I have tired ye wi' my langwinded story—Sam, by the mercy of God, had just landed at Dornoch as we sailed from it; and being on his way to Edderachills, for the very purpose of asking my Nelly in marriage, he had pushed on, meaning to travel all night across the country, when the providential occurrence took place. Weel, we went now to Ely, where we remained for a time—old grandy, that is, myself, my son, and his family; but times became tight there, and the family kept still increasing; so at last we got acquainted with the worthy gentleman, Mr Yool, to whom all these great works and these neat cottages belong, and he brought us up here, and set us down comfortably, where not only my son-in-law, but every wean, male and female, above seven years of age, can earn its own clothes and subsistence. We are now, sir, in comparative affluence; and all this, sir, is owing to these improvements in machinery and in chemistry, which at one time drove me from my native land. 'SECOND THOUGHTS, THEY SAY, ARE BEST;' at least so it has been with me, as I sit here in my old age, in comparative ease and comfort, and see my grandchildren growing up in domestic affection and public usefulness around me. Here is no scattering of the young family—one going east, and one west, never to meet

again; but here, every night, all congregate around *one hearth*, whilst a psalm is sung, a chapter is read, and a prayer said by grandy himself!"

I shall never regret the loss of my old and favourite amusement, whilst I can recollect this old man's narrative, and the many happy and comfortable homes which now occupy the once solitary holms of *Dura Den*.

THE LAIRD OF LUCKY'S HOW.

HAVE any of our readers ever been at the Hague? It doesn't much signify whether they have or not. They know that it is one of the most beautiful towns in the Netherlands, and that it is not a little famous in ancient story; and their knowing this is quite enough for our present purpose. If, however, they knew the town a little more intimately, they would know that one of its principal and most ancient streets is called the Hoogstraat; and that here, once on a time, stood the principal inn or hostelry of the town. It was an oldfashioned house, with a great variety of projecting and excrescent structures, of all sorts and sizes, stuck to it, to increase its internal accommodation, and to puzzle the curious inquirer—at least this seemed a part of the design—who, while taking an outside view, wondered what they could all be intended for.

Notwithstanding, however, the somewhat uncouth and perplexing appearance of the exterior of the Drouthsloken —which was the name of the ancient hostel in question—it was a sufficiently handsome and comfortable house within. Its kitchen, in particular, was a sight; it was so clean, so bright, and so cheerful: shining all round with pewter trenchers and brass utensils of various descriptions, all as lustrous as whiting and hard rubbing could make them. The place was a treat to look at; and no less a treat to look at was its jolly landlord, Thonder Vander Tromp. From stem to stern, Thonder was of the regular Dutch build; which, without descending to particulars, we may say consists, as our readers know, in exhibiting an amplitude of material at all points of the person. In this respect, our

good friend Thonder might be considered a *chef d'œuvre;* for he was of the most magnificent dimensions, especially latitudinally. In longitude, indeed, he might be considered as a little deficient. He was of no great height; but his girth was superb, and told a tale of good living, with an unction which no language could approach. In this tale the ruddy, jovial countenance of mine host of the Drouthsloken cordially joined; and supported by its hilarious testimony the facts therein set forth.

Having thus shortly described both mine host and his hostel, we proceed to say that, on a certain evening in the middle of the winter of 1651, a stranger, carrying a small bundle under his arm, walked, or rather stalked—for there was something uncouth in his gait—into the passage of the Drouthsloken. He was wrapped up in a Scottish plaid, and wore on his head the well-known flat blue bonnet of the Scottish Lowlands. In person, he was tall and spare, with the grave and serious cast of countenance so characteristic of that people whose national dress he wore. Unpolished, however, as the exterior of this person bespoke him to be, there was yet, in his light grey eye, a mingled expression of determination and intelligence, that never failed to secure the respect which his manner and first appearance might well have forfeited. His age seemed about forty or forty-five.

Finding no one to whom he might address himself in the passage of the inn, the stranger held on his way to its further extremity—no trifling distance; towards which he was attracted by sounds of laughter and merriment, issuing from the kitchen of the Drouthsloken, which was situated at the farther end of the passage by which the house was intersected, and the same with that which he was now traversing.

The sounds of merriment by which the stranger had been attracted proceeded from a group of young men, who,

standing in the form of a semicircle in front of the jolly landlord of the house—who, again, stood with his back to the fire, wielding a huge black bottle in his hand—were indulging in uproarious laughter at the witty sayings which he, the latter, seemed throwing amongst them like so many squibs and crackers.

At the moment that our friend of the plaid and bonnet entered the kitchen of the Drouthsloken, our jovial host was standing, as we have said, with his back to the fire—a roaring one, by the way—and looking the very personification of all that's joyous, and comfortable, and care-dispelling. A bright and broad red waistcoat covered his portly front; but buttoned so short a way up as to expose a dazzling display of snow-white linen beneath. Across this brilliant garment there lay also the folds of a pure white apron, tucked up with business-like smartness. Dark velveteen small-clothes, with well-polished shoes, on which shone a pair of massive silver buckles, completed the outer man of Thonder Vander Tromp.

Amongst the merry group of which Tromp was one, something like a sensation was created by the entrance of the stranger. The career of badinage was instantly arrested, and the eyes of the whole party turned towards him. Undismayed by the general attention he had excited, the stranger coolly deposited his bundle on a side-table, and, approaching at once the fire, and the group by which it was surrounded, delivered himself, as he did so, of the very simple and homely remark—

"There's a wat nicht, gentlemen."

Now, the stranger, although he had thus expressed himself, had not ventured to hope that his language would be understood. He had spoken mechanically as it were, and delivered himself in his usual way, simply because he could do no otherwise, and because he thought it necessary to say something. Great, therefore, was his surprise, and, we may

add, his joy also, when one of the young men of the party, of singularly graceful manners and bearing, acknowledged his greeting in excellent English, and with great politeness and civility of speech.

Delighted at having met with a native of Great Britain, which he could not doubt the young man who had addressed him was—

"Feth, but I am richt glad, sir," said the stranger—"excuse my freedom—at having met wi' a countryman, as I tak ye to be, sir—in this outlandish place. It's mair than I expeckit, I'm sure. I had nae thochts o' meetin wi' ony but ane."

"And pray who was that one, my good friend?" said the young man, throwing, at the same time, a rapid look of intelligence around on his companions, who seemed at once to comprehend its meaning. "Who was that one, my good friend," he said, "if I may ask, without subjecting myself to a charge of impertinence?"

"Ou, nae impertinence at a', sir; only ye'll excuse me keepin my thoom on the mater ye inquire aboot till I ken better wha's speerin. Excuse me, sir, excuse me, for this plainness," continued the stranger, smiling; "but I hae come frae a country whar a slip o' the tongue, in thae times, micht cost a man his head; and that maks folks wary, ye ken."

"Faith, and good reason it should, friend," replied the young man, laughingly. "Thou hast well accounted for thy caution. But recollect thou art now in a different country, mine honest friend, and hast no need to be so guarded in thy speech."

"Feth, sir, I dinna ken. That may be; but, if ye had fan the ticklin o' a tow aboot yer craig, as I hae dune, ye wadna forget it in a hurry, nor the lesson it taught ye to keep yer tongue atween yer teeth."

"Well, no doubt; that certainly is rough schooling," said

the young cavalier; "but I repeat again, that thou art now in a different country, friend; and one where thou hast nothing to fear from a reasonable use of thy tongue."

"Aweel, it may be sae, sir," replied the imperturbable stranger; "but I ken o' nae country whar a calm sough's no guid counsel."

"Ha! ha! ha! right, friend, right," roared mine jolly host of the Drouthsloken, with open mouth and noisy laugh. "It is not goot to say too moosh anywhere; no more in the Hague as any oder place. But here is all honourable gentlemen," he added, casting a furtive glance of good-humoured meaning at the young man who had first addressed the Scotch visiter, "who will not make bad use of what you shall say."

"Ou, I hae nae doot o' that at a', sir," replied the latter; "but, to be plain wi' ye, it's no my intention to say onything that onybody can mak ony use o', either guid, bad, or indifferent." And, having said this, the speaker showed a very palpable desire to put an end to the conference, which he evidently began to think was studiously directed by the other party towards an elucidation of his purposes in visiting the Hague. In this disposition, however, he was by no means joined by the party in whose presence he was, particularly by the young man by whom he had been first addressed, who evinced a gratification in the peculiar humour of the stranger, and an interest in him altogether that would not permit of his being shaken off. So far indeed, was he from permitting this, that he insisted on the latter's joining him in a bottle of wine, which he instantly ordered mine jolly host of the Drouthsloken to produce.

On the return of the latter, bearing a bottle of wine in one hand and a screw in the other—

"Will your—your——" he said, but was here interrupted by a wink from the person he addressed, which had the evident effect of making him substitute a different word for

that which he had intended to use, and he added "your honour." "Will your honour not go up-stairs to your own favourite apartment, de leetle blue parlour?"

"No, no, Mynheer Tromp," replied the young cavalier, "we'll just stay where we are. The night is cold, and I have always thought your kitchen the most comfortable and cheerful apartment in your house. So place us a table here, close by the fire, if you please."

Mynheer Vander Tromp bowed a humble assent; and, in an instant after, a small round table of walnut-tree, shining like a mirror, was placed in the desired situation. Bottles and glasses covered it in a twinkling, and in a twinkling also was the party seated around it, including our friend of the bonnet and plaid. This worthy person at first shied the good fellowship thus thrust upon him; but, gradually warming with the wine he drank—for bottle succeeded bottle with marvellous celerity—he became by degrees less and less reserved in his manner, until at length his natural caution giving way altogether before the increasing pressure of the vinous influence, he became as communicative as he had before been the reverse.

Availing himself of the altered disposition of the stranger, the young cavalier, whom we have represented as having more especially attached himself to the former, again endeavoured to extract from him the purpose of his visit to the Hague; and his attempt was now successful.

"Aweel, I'll just tell ye Gude's truth, gentlemen," he said, in answer to a question, or rather hint, on the subject of explanation which had just been addressed to him by his young friend; and for the reply to which all waited—"I'll just tell ye Gude's truth, as I think ye're a' honourable men, and wadna willingly bring a man into trouble, wha has gien ye nae cause o' offence. Ye see, then freends, I hae just arrived frae Scotland, and hae come here to see our unfortunate young king, Charles the Second that should be, whase

unhappy story ye dootless a' ken. I hae been ruined oot o' hoose and ha' for the part I took in his puir faither's behalf, and hae been obliged to flee my ain country, besides, for the same reason; and hae noo come here, to see if His Majesty, God bless him, could afford me ony sort o' protection till the storm that's noo tearin a' up by the roots in Scotland blaws by; and that's just the hail affair, gentlemen."

Long ere the stranger had concluded this account of the purpose of his visit to the Hague, a look of intelligence, which originated with his young friend, had passed amongst his auditors, and, in the case of the former, was associated with a peculiar expression of sympathy. Both, however, the look alluded to, and the latter symptom of a yet deeper feeling, was unobserved by the person whose communication had given rise to them. Becoming now querist in turn, he asked, "if ony o' the gentlemen could tell him whar the king leeved, and if they could put him on a way o' gettin introduced to him?"

"Thou couldst not have lighted more luckily for that, my friend," said the young man to whom we have already so often alluded, "than thou hast done in coming amongst us; for it happens that I hold a confidential place near the person of Charles, and will have much pleasure in exerting my influence in procuring you the introduction you desire."

"Mony thanks to ye, freend," replied the martyr to royalty —"mony thanks to ye, if ye mean, by Charles, His Majesty the King o' England—God bless him!"

"I certainly do, my friend. I mean him and no other."

"Weel, sir—excuse my freedom—if ye do, I think ye micht ca' him sae. Wha can dispute his title, although his back be at the wa'?"

"Oh! no one—no one, my good friend, I believe—that is, lawfully," replied the young cavalier, laughingly; "but, seeing his present circumstances—a wandering exile in a foreign land, crownless and coinless—we, somehow or other,

cannot get our tongues about those sounding titles that are his birthright. We prefer calling him simply Charles, or English Charles; and I rather think he prefers it himself. His titles he thinks best left in abeyance in the meantime."

"Aweel, if it be his ain pleasure, I hae nae mair to say. Perhaps it's as prudent and becomin; for, as ye say, sir, a king that has neither a croon on his head nor in his pouch is in but a sair condition for his dignity. That maun be allowed."

There was not much in this remark itself to excite merriment; but there was certainly something in the naïve manner in which it was delivered that was calculated to produce this effect; and it did. A shout of laughter, in which the speaker's young friend was the loudest and heartiest performer, acknowledged the peculiarity to which we have alluded. On the laugh subsiding, the latter again addressed the former, saying—

"But, friend, you have not yet told us by what name we should address you."

"As to that," replied the stranger, smilingly, "I believe the maist appropriate name or title ye could gie me at the present moment wad be that o' the Launless Laird. But it wasna aye sae. I had a bit guid property in the Loudans, ca'ed Lucky's How, every clod o't my ain, wi' a yearly rental o' forty merks, guid siller, forby the thirlage o' the Mill o' Meldrum, that was worth a guid twa or three merks mair. But a's gane awa like a handfu o' ingan peelins on a windy day; that cursed battle o' Worcester settled a', and left me without a groat, and without as much grund as wad mak the hillock o' a moudiwart. But it's a' gane in a guid cause; I dinna begrudge't; and, besides, things 'll maybe come roond again; and, if they dinna, there's nae help for't."

"So you were at the battle of Worcester, laird?" said the speaker's young friend.

"Feth! that I was, sir; and there," he added, holding out his right hand, which was minus the forefinger and thumb—"there's a certificate o' the truth o' my statement, gien under the hand o' ane o' Crum'll's praying dragoons. It was an ugly lick; but there were a hantle o' uglier anes than it gaun whar it was gotten. It was a coorse business athegither."

"It was no less, my good friend," said the young cavalier. "I was there, too."

"Was ye, feth?" replied the laird. "Then, if ye was, sir, ye saw a bonny stramash—mair than ye'll forget in a hurry, I daursay. It was an awfu scene yon, when the dragoons cam in upon us in the streets o' Worcester. 'Od! they sliced and slapped aboot them as if they had gotten into a plantation o' lang kale, and no amang Christian men like themsels."

"It was indeed a sad business," replied the young man, with a melancholy smile. "Saw ye the king on that day?"

"I did," replied the laird.

"Wouldst know him again?"

"No; I canna think I wad. I just got a glisk o' him, for the first and last time, in the middle o' the dirdum at Worcester. When I saw him, the puir lad was fechtin like a Turk; but it was a' to nae purpose. He was obleeged to rin for't at last, and to perk himsel up in a tree, like a hoolet, to keep oot o' the way o' Crum'll's sodgers. If they had gotten the puir lad—as it was a God's mercy they didna—they wad hae taen aff his head, nae doot, as they did his unfortunate faither's; and then, as, indeed, it's said they proposed to do, made a buttonmaker o' his sister, and maybe a Spitalfields weaver o' his brither, the Duke o' Gloucester."

"I *have* heard," replied the young cavalier, with a contemptuous smile, while a blush of deep feeling, it might be indignation, overspread his intelligent countenance—"I

have heard that some such idea was actually entertained by the Parliament as that thou hast alluded to."

"There's nae doot that such a report was current, sir; but whether true or no, I winna tak upon me to say. They may hae been belied in't."

"I hope they may," replied the young cavalier, musingly. Then, suddenly recovering himself, and assuming his usual cheerfulness of manner—"And what are the king's friends about in Scotland?" he said, slapping the laird good-humouredly on the knee.

"Dooms little, sir," replied the laird. "They daurna cheep. Monk has gotten his heel fairly on their necks; so that deil a ane o' them can wag either tongue or finger. There's a wheen o' them taen to the hills wi' Glencairn and Balcarras; but what can they do? Naething. It's a puir thing to be in that way, sir. I had a trial o' that mysel. Tak my word for't, that sleepin in a moss hag, or in the lee o' a whin-bush, and leevin upon lavrocks, or raw turnips and bog-water, is nae better than it's ca'ed."

"Well, well, laird, I hope times will mend with our poor friends in Scotland," replied the young cavalier, to whom this picture of the sufferings of the royalists, notwithstanding the strong tincture it exhibited of the speaker's natural humour, seemed to give much pain. "I hope times will mend with them yet, and that feasting and feather-beds will make them forget the raw turnips and whin-bushes ye speak of. In the meantime, my good friend, push round the bottle, and let us talk of other matters; for these make me sad."

Nothing loth, the Laird of Lucky's How filled up a brimming bumper, and, drinking "better times," sent it down after some two or three dozen that had preceded it.

The party were now getting into high glee. The laugh, the joke, and the bottle went merrily round, and the merriest, and apparently the most jovial of the company, was

the young gentleman whom we have hitherto represented as expressly attaching himself to the laird, and whose name, as the latter learned from himself, was Jones. This roysterer was the life and soul of the company, when roystering became the order of the evening; but his mirth was tempered with a gentleness of demeanour, and an air of polished hilarity, if such a phrase may be permitted, as inspired the idea of the presence of a perfect gentleman. His whole manner, in short, was exceedingly captivating. His fancy was ready and playful; his wit brilliant and appropriate; and the affability and winning character of his smile irresistible. Altogether, he was a most delightful companion, and admirably calculated to figure in such circumstances as those in which he was now placed. How he might acquit himself in a scene of a more grave and serious character, it would not perhaps have been easy to guess.

The mirth of the party in the kitchen of the Drouthsloken had just attained its height, when a circumstance occurred which did not affect its humour, but somewhat changed its character. This was the entrance of two of the landlord's daughters. Dressed in the neat and simple, although somewhat peculiar, costume of their country, with their hair tightly braided up, and bound with a broad silver frontlet, so as to exhibit in bold relief the contour of their full and fair countenances, two prettier girls than Juliana and Joan Vander Tromp were not within the walls of the Hague.

As they entered the kitchen, to which they had come merely, or, perhaps, we should have said ostensibly, to look after some household affairs, the girls curtsied slightly but gracefully to the company by which it was occupied, and, smiling pleasantly and good-naturedly the while, passed on to the upper end of the apartment, and began to occupy themselves in some little domestic duties. They had not, however, been permitted to enter unnoticed. On their ap-

pearance, the whole party got up from their seats, and acknowledged their presence by a gallant greeting; and in this courtesy, Mr Jones again shone pre-eminent by the greater grace and deeper devotion he displayed in his chivalrous welcome to the fair visiters.

It might have been observed, too, that to him, in turn, were the curtsies and the looks also of the young ladies most especially directed; but in this case these were associated with a degree of respect for which it would not have been easy to account.

"What think ye of our fair Netherlanders, laird?" said Mr Jones to the latter, in a half whisper, when the ladies' attention was, or seemed to be, engrossed by their occupation. "Will they not match your Scotch lasses, think you?"

"That's a pair o' braw queans, I maun allow," replied the laird. "Just twa as bonny bits o' lassocks as ane wad wish to see; but I think they want the complexion—they hacna the blume o' our kilted heather trampers. They want the caller red that the norland breeze puts on the cheeks o' our Scottish gilpies. That's my humble opinion, sir. But they're twa bonny lassocks, for a' that. Nae doot o't."

"On the score of complexion I grant ye, laird, they are, perhaps, deficient a little, but I think this amply compensated by the intellectual expression, the fine contour, and the softer and more intense lustre of the eye. I have seen your Scottish maidens, laird, and admired them in my time."

"Feth, sir, I maun say your taste wad hae been very questionable if ye hadna," interposed the laird. "When and whar saw ye them, if ye please, sir? What pairt o' Scotland was ye in?" he added.

The question appeared to place Jones in a difficulty for a moment; but he at length answered—

"Why, laird, I have been in many parts of Scotland in my day. I was with the king at Scone."

"Was that at the time o' his coronation?" inquired the laird.

"It was," said Jones.

"And it wad be there, like, and aboot the quarter o' Perth, that ye saw our bonny Scotch lasses, I warrant," said the laird, laughingly. "Ay, if a' tales be true, the king admired them when he saw them, as muckle as ye could do, sir," continued the laird.

"Why, they do report something of that kind," replied Jones, with some confusion of manner, and slightly colouring as he spoke—indications of a feeling, whatever it was, which seemed highly edifying to his companions, who marked it with repeated bursts of laughter; "they do report something of the kind," said Jones; "but we mustn't credit all we hear, laird."

"The tae half's aboot the usual thing I believe," replied the latter; "and, if we tak that in the present case—that is, regarding the king's gallantries ——"

"Ay, ay, go on, laird, go on—that's it—give us all you know about the king's gallantries in Scotland," shouted, almost simultaneously, the other members of the party. "Go on, go on, like a good fellow."

"Nay, nay, now," exclaimed Jones, earnestly, but good-humouredly, "as one of the king's confidential servants, I must protest, laird, against your divulging anything of that kind in my presence."

"Never mind the protest—never mind the protest, laird. Go on, and we'll stand between you and the consequences," again shouted several members of the party. "What know ye about the king's gallantries at Scone?"

"Ou, it was nae great things after a', to mak a wark aboot; but, ye see, there war a wheen unco godly ministers there at the time, an' they made an awfu ado aboot it.

The hale affair was just this. The king happenin to go into the room that he usually occupied in the Palace o' Scone ae mornin earlier than ordinar, wha does he fin sortin't oot but a bit bonny lassie o' a chaumermaid. Aweel, whan she saw the king enter, wham she hadna expeckit for at least an hour after, what does she do but mak a rin oot, as it war, and what does the king do but kep her, throw his arms aboot her neck, and gie her a hearty kiss—a reglar royal salute? And awa gaed the lassie, skirlin like a curlew, half-mad wi' the fricht an' the honour. But what wad ye hae o't but that ane o' the Covenantin ministers, wha war then as thick as craws aboot Scone—it bein just like a rookery wi' the black coats for the time—suld be just at the moment stanin at a window, in anither apartment that lookit richt into the ane whar the king had kissed the bit lassie, and saw the hale affair; and what does he do but report the scandal to his brethren, wha, shocked at the indecency, appointed a committee o' ministers to reprove the royal offender! This committee accordingly waited on the king, whan their spokesman, ane Douglas—an awfu stern man—after rebookin His Majesty, added, that it wad be prudent o' him, whan he desired to amuse himsel in future, to be mair carefu in shuttin the windows."

"Capital, laird; capital!" shouted several of the party, in convulsions of laughter. "Any more—any more?"

"Nay, nay, now, laird," said Jones, laughing, and clapping his hand on the mouth of the tell-tale; "on your allegiance to your lawful sovereign, I command ye to silence. He must not, in my presence, be made a subject of mirth to these idle jesters."

"Tuts, it's but a joke, man; but if ye think it wad offend His Majesty, I'll say nae mair. I wad suner lose something considerable than do that. But what the waur can the king be o' it's bein kent that he likes the lasses? I trow it's rather a feather in his kep than a discredit till him."

"Well done, laird!" exclaimed Jones, clapping the former jocosely on the shoulder. "Thou'rt a good old soul; and I shall take care that Charles knows of thy lenity towards his failings. It will do thee no harm with him."

Having said this, Jones rose from the table, and went towards the landlord's daughters, who were still busily occupied, or apparently so, at any rate, at the further end of the apartment. His approach to these fair damsels was made in the most gallant fashion imaginable, and with all the air and manner of a thoroughbred courtier and cavalier. What conversation passed between him and the girls was not overheard by the other members of the party; but the frequent bursts of laughter which were from time to time elicited, sufficiently showed that it was of a mirthful character, and that the badinage of Jones fully supported, in point and brilliancy, the credit of his other kindred qualifications. After some time, he returned to his party, and again took his seat beside the laird; who, on his doing so, remarked—

"Feth, sir, ye seem as guid a hand at botherin the lasses as your master. It's in the family, I think."

A roar of laughter succeeded this sally, to which Jones himself was one of the largest contributors, although it was certainly mingled with some embarrassment of manner. From this embarrassment, however, he was unexpectedly relieved by the strains of a wandering minstrel, which suddenly rose from the street, just underneath the window of the kitchen of the Drouthsloken. As these strains were of no ordinary excellence, they instantly attracted the attention of all in the apartment, inclusive of the landlord's two fair daughters, one of whom in especial (Juliana) evinced, by her flurried and agitated manner, a greater interest in the presence of the minstrel than would have been warranted on the supposition that it was merely accidental. Her confusion, however, and the consciousness which it

implied of a knowledge exceeding that of those around her, passed undiscovered by all except Jones, whose more vigilant eye detected these symptoms of secret and mysterious understanding. He made no remark, however, on the subject; and carefully concealed his discovery, not only from the rest of the party, but from her who was the object of his mental speculations. Having concluded his serenade, or at least its first department, which consisted, first, of a preliminary flourish on a violin, executed with great spirit and felicity, and then of a song, accompanied by the instrument, sung in a peculiarly deep-toned, but exceedingly melodious, voice, the minstrel ceased for a few seconds, when Jones proposed that he should be invited in; and that, if he proved merely a gallant, he should be asked to a glass of wine; and if he turned out a professional performer, who came in the exercise of his vocation, he should be requested to entertain them with his music within-doors. To this proposal a general assent was at once given; and this assent was immediately followed by the proceeding proper to its fulfilment. Three or four of the party, headed by Jones, instantly rushed out, and surrounded the astonished minstrel before he was aware. At first he discovered symptoms of a desire to escape from the party; but, seeing this impossible, he stood his ground manfully, and awaited the pleasure of the gentlemen, whose notice, he said, he had the honour, it seemed, of so specially attracting. A momentary glance at the speaker satisfied Jones and his party of his quality. It was that of a professed street performer; or at least of a person of the humblest class, as was indicated by his apparel, which consisted of a short cloak, with a sort of coarse jerkin underneath, a pair of wide and ill-made knee-breeches, coarse blue woollen stockings, and a pair of enormous wooden shoes. On his head was a brown felt hat, of a conical shape, adorned with a cock's feather, and altogether resembling those seen in

paintings of Dutch boors. These outward indications, then, settled the question of the minstrel's rank, and rendered no ceremony necessary in inviting him in.

"You play well, friend," said Jones. "We have been listening to you, and will be glad if you will come and amuse us for half-an-hour or so. I will see to your being suitably recompensed."

"Thank you, honourable sirs," replied the minstrel. "I doubt not of my recompense, were it once earned; but the hour is late, and I may not tarry abroad longer. Moreover, I make it a rule never to enter any house, or to perform to any private party within-doors. I bid you a good-night, gentlemen."

"Nay, by my troth, and you do no such thing, friend," said Jones, seizing the minstrel, who was at this moment about making off, by the skirt of his jerkin. "We don't part with good company in this way. Friends," he said, addressing his companions, "lend a hand here, to secure the fiddler. We must compel him to his own interest, which he would thus wilfully neglect."

No sooner said than done. In a twinkling the reluctant minstrel was grasped on all sides, and in an instant after found himself in the centre of the kitchen of the Drouthsloken, to which he had been carried almost bodily, in despite of a certain quantum of vain resistance and remonstrance, by which he had at first endeavoured to thwart the purpose of his captors. On being brought into the light of the kitchen, it was discovered that the captured fiddler and songster was deficient of an eye, at least of the use of it, as it was covered by a large green shade, apparently unnecessarily large, as it concealed the half of his face. Another peculiarity was now also observable, and this was, that the neck of his cloak was clasped at a most extraordinary height up on his face, and that he would by no means listen to any entreaties, either to lay aside the

said cloak, or even to unloosen the clasp by which it was secured in so strange a position. We need scarcely add, that the effect of these various dispositions of his externals was to conceal almost entirely his countenance, of which only a small portion of the left side was visible; and even this it was attempted to circumscribe as much as possible, by the disposition of the hair of the head, which was carefully combed down over the exposed space.

"Come now, friend," said Jones, addressing the musician, and handing him, at the same time, a huge brimmer of wine, "gulp this with a celerity that shall be creditable to thy craft, man, and let us have thereafter a taste of thy calling—some of thy merriest strains; for I mean to see if we cannot make a dance of it, by the help of these fair dames there"—inclining his head towards the landlord's daughters, who still kept their ground in the kitchen; although, if the matter had been inquired into, we rather fear they would have found some difficulty in naming the particular duty that detained them.

Finding it of no use to resist the spirit which he saw prevailed amongst the party, the minstrel quietly despatched the contents of the goblet that had been presented to him, and commenced the duty that had been imposed upon him. On the first sound of the preliminary flourish of his bow becoming audible, Jones went up to the buxom daughters of Mynheer Tromp, and in his most gallant manner asked them if they would have any objection to take the floor with him and his friends, seeing that they had unexpectedly made the acquisition of an admirable musician, although, he must confess, rather an odd-looking man; and Jones, as he made the latter remark, looked slyly at Juliana, to mark its effect, and found it acknowledged by a deep but transient blush, which she endeavoured to conceal.

The proposal, however, of a dance was accepted on the part of the younger sister, Joan, with eager alacrity; and

on the part of Juliana with an appearance of the same willingness, but with a confusion and hesitation of manner that gave token of a counteracting feeling. Having obtained the consent of the fair sisters to "tread a measure," the gay courtier took a hand of each, and gallantly led them to the middle of the floor; intimating, at the same time, by signal, to his friends to clear the space for the impending performances—a signal which they lost no time in obeying; two or three seizing chairs apiece; and other two or three—one of whom was the laird, who seemed to enter with great goodwill into the spirit of the thing—lifting the table, with all it carried, to a distant corner of the apartment.

Just as these preparations were completed, and while Jones stood in the middle of the floor, doing the polite to his two ladies—but directing his attentions most especially to the elder—their father, the jolly Vander Tromp, who had been absent for a considerable time, entered the apartment, when, perceiving what was going on—

"Ah, very goot, very goot!" he said, in his most hilarious manner—his jolly, broad red face beaming with delight. "A daunce, a daunce—ah, very goot thing a daunce"—and he cracked his finger and thumb, and threw up one of his huge legs in the air, with an expression of highly-excited feeling. Then, calming down a moment—"You vill have no objection, Mynheer Jones, to my frow have share in the daunce?"

"Objection, Tromp!" ejaculated Jones, with well-feigned horror at the supposition. "By no means. I shall be but too proud of the honour."

"An tank you, Mynheer Jones—you are too goot." And saying this, Vander Tromp disappeared, with another joyous flourish of finger and thumb and left leg, in search of Mrs Tromp, to conduct her into the presence of the dancers, and to a share of their amusement.

In the meantime, the parties were set, and the dance commenced with great vigour; Jones displaying in this exercise

a degree of skill and grace in entire keeping with the refinement of his general manner. His spirits, too, were exuberant, and infused a life into all around him, that all the other circumstances combined could not have inspired.

Although by no means wanting in attention to the younger lady, it might be observed, however, that Jones was much more assiduous in his civilities to Juliana; and, what was a yet more remarkable circumstance, it might also have been observed, that the musician evinced a strange sensation of uneasiness whenever he saw Jones paying any particular attention to this lady. He fidgeted in his seat, bungled the tune he was playing, and shot fiercer glances from his solitary optic on the revellers on the floor, but most especially on Jones and his fair favourite. What was odd, too, Jones seemed to be aware of the feeling he was exciting in the sensitive fiddler, and to delight in the uneasiness he was occasioning; for the more markedly it was evinced, the more assiduous and persevering was he in his gallantries. Although, however, all this might have been sufficiently evident to a close and vigilant observer, it escaped the notice of those present; for Jones managed his secret tactics, whatever these were, with great caution, and exhibited no other symptoms of consciousness than a slight, scarcely perceptible, smile of sly intelligence.

We have said that none present were cognisant of this mysterious understanding, or rather misunderstanding, between Jones and the musician; but we are not sure that this is quite correct. There was an air of embarrassment about the manner of the fair Juliana, that seemed to indicate that she was also in possession of some share of the secret knowledge that was working so much underhand mischief; and of this Jones appeared likewise to be aware.

Thus stood matters, then, with this trio, when Vander Tromp and his wife—the former leading the latter on his arm—came tripping into the kitchen, with the grace and

agility of a couple of elephants; for the worthy spouse of the worthy landlord of the Drouthsloken was, like himself, of the regular Dutch build, and had very much the shape and appearance of a featherbed upon legs, if such an object can be conceived. Her breadth, which was naturally of the most formidable dimensions, was greatly increased by a stiff silk gown, which projected in rigid amplitude on all sides, and gave to her whole person an appearance of illimitable expanse. Notwithstanding these vast dimensions, there was yet a comeliness about her bulk, and an expression of benevolence and good-nature in her rosy countenance, that rendered her altogether by no means an unpleasing object.

On the entrance of mine host and his larger as well as better half, Jones, with that gallant devotion which seemed natural to him, instantly advanced towards the latter, and, with a preliminary flourish of some of his most graceful obeisances, in which, perhaps, a very shrewd observer might have discovered a slight tincture of mock gallantry, invited her to join him in the next dance. The large lady, with a good-humoured smile, curtsied a ready acquiescence to the polite invitation; and, in the next instant, might be seen sailing majestically through the mazes of the dance, closely attended by her respectful and devoted partner.

In the meantime, the unwilling musician seemed heartily tired of his employment, and looked as if he would have given a trifle not only to have got quit of that employment, but to have got out of the house altogether. Jones, however, was inexorable; and the more marked the fiddler's impatience became, the more unmercifully did he deal out his orders to "play up;" and much did he seem to delight, although he kept the satisfaction to himself, in the grin of irritation which his commands never failed to produce on the countenance of the hapless musician. Leaving, then, the general position of matters in the kitchen of the Drouthsloken in this state, we shall resume the particular history

of the laird's proceedings, which we fear the reader may think we have already too long neglected.

Of the ongoings of the evening the laird, who was now pretty well in the wind, was an attentive, but by no means a silent, spectator. In the enthusiasm which the proceedings passing before him had excited, he had mounted a chair, and from that elevated position was whooping, and yelling, and shouting, and clapping his hands—at once to express his own delight in the performances, and to encourage the performers.

"That's it, my bonny lassie!" he screamed out, addressing the younger Tromp, whose agility particularly pleased him. "'Od ye're just doin amazinly! That's it! Kilt yer coats, ye cutty, and skelp at it withouten fear or dread! That's the true way to mak a figure on a flure!"

"Feth, no amiss, guidwife, no amiss ava," he said, and now addressing himself to the better half of mine host of the Drouthsloken, who was heaving like a seventy-four in a ground-swell—"no amiss ava, considerin the wecht ye carry. Ye're just doin wonderfu, too, to be sae broad in the beam. My word, but ye are a sonsy lass," he continued, his attention gradually directing itself to a contemplation of her personal dimensions. "If ye're an unce, ye're twenty stane, quarry wecht; and everybody kens that's no scrimpit."

"Weel dune, Jones! weel dune, lad! Hoo, hurrah! up wi't! Ye've a pair o' guid souple shanks o' your ain. That's it, lad—that's it! Up wi't! Hoo, hurrah, hurrah!"

And the laird clapped his hands with a vigour and energy that emitted a sound more like the contact of a pair of boards than human palms; and accompanying this expression of heartiness of feeling with whoops and shouts, that drowned the noise of both feet and fiddle.

Impartial in the distribution of his praises, the laird now directed his compliments to the various other members of

the dancing party, severally, and finished with mine host himself.

"Unco weel, laird, unco weel," he exclaimed, addressing that worthy performer. "Really, unco weel! ye've a wonderfu licht foot to hae sic a heavy stern. That's it, laird! Up wi' the left leg!—capital, capital!" And again the laird clapped his hands, and again raised his tremendous war-whoop.

Hitherto the dancers had paid no particular attention to the laird's noisy expressions of interest in their proceedings; but they so highly tickled Mr Jones, that, on the conclusion of the dance, he came laughing up to the laird, and asked him if he would not take a turn on the floor on the next occasion.

"No, thank ye, Mr Jones," replied the latter; "my dancin days are weel aboot owre now; but, though the flesh is weak, the spirit's willin, and, to mak mysel as guid company as possible, I'll tak a screed o' the fiddle an ye like; for I'm mair souple aboot the elbows than the ankles now-a-days, and, besides, I dinna think that fallow puts the richt smeddum in his tunes. They're awfu draicky, and no like our Scotch measures, that mak ye fling your legs aboot like flails, till ye dinna ken whether your heels or your head's uppermost."

"Ah ha, very fair, laird," replied Jones, laughing; "and although I have reasons for keeping all relief from the fiddler as long as possible, I am so curious to hear your performance, that I, for my part, consent to your taking a turn of his instrument, provided he will allow you."

"We'll try him," replied the laird, briefly, and at the same time stepping down from his high place, and thereafter proceeding with Jones towards the musician of the evening, in order to offer his services in the way of assisting him.

"Friend," said Jones to the one-eyed minstrel, while the

laird stood behind, or rather beside him, waiting the result of his application—"friend, have you any objection to be relieved a little in your labours? Here is a brother musician, who would gladly take a turn with you, provided you would favour him with the loan of your instrument."

The only reply of the fiddler was a sullen, dissentient growl; for he was as averse to speaking as to exposing his countenance.

"What! won't you lend our friend here your fiddle?" said Jones, now bursting out into a fit of suppressed laughter, which seemed, from its heartiness, and the relief which it evidently afforded him, to have been long pent up. "Do, man, do—you had better do. *I'll* be much obliged to you"—with marked emphasis on the pronoun, which he further increased by a gentle but significant tread on the toe of the perplexed minstrel, who, after returning the secret intimation of Jones by a smile and an intelligent leer of his open eye, handed the fiddle to the laird without saying a word.

The incident which we have just described was unobserved by any other party but those concerned in it; or, at least, if it was observed, it was not understood; and in this predicament also stood he who had the best opportunity of seeing it—namely, the laird. He saw all that passed between Jones and the fiddler; but he could not make out what it meant; nor did he seem to concern himself about discovering it. Having got the fiddle into his possession, the laird commenced tuning it with great assiduity, and with a bow stroke that showed he was well practised in the use of the instrument. The tuning effected to his mind, he struck up, with great vigour, a ranting Scotch reel, which he played with uncommon spirit and skill. At first, the novelty of the measure took the greater part of the audience by surprise. For a time they could make nothing of it; but music being a universal language, both the spirit and rhythm of the tune soon began to be perceived and appre-

ciated; and, with a little schooling from Jones, who seemed not only to understand the music, but to be delighted with it, the dancers were placed in the order of a reel; and, by a vigilant superintendence of their motions on the part of the latter, they contrived to get through the figure with tolerable correctness. All were delighted with the new dance. It was repeated again and again, and every time with increased success, and a diminishing necessity for the interference of Jones, who, having entered fully into the spirit of the mirthful train, whooped and yelled as vociferously as ever the laird had done. His enthusiasm was infectious; all caught it—even the broad-beamed wife of Vander Tromp, who moved under the inspiring influence of the laird's bow with an agility that no one could have believed her ponderous person capable of; while the others, including mine portly host himself, flung, and flew, and shuffled, as madly as the witches in the midnight dance in Alloway Kirk. The spell, in short, of the laird's music was complete, and each owned the hilarious spirit which it was so well calculated to diffuse over all who were within reach of its influence—in other words, over all who were within hearing of the laird's admirably-played fiddle. Inspired with additional glee by these indications of the powerful effect of his music, the laird still further heightened its influence by breaking out, as he played, into short, abrupt shouts, which were responded to, from time to time, by the male dancers, but with most especial emphasis by Jones, who seemed to be, altogether, at the very acme of human enjoyment.

It was while the revellers were thus dinning the drowsy ear of night with their obstreperous mirth, and while they were yet in the full career of enjoyment, that four persons suddenly entered the kitchen of the Drouthsloken. They were in the garb of seamen, wearing large, shaggy pea-jackets, and low, round-crowned, glazed hats, with circular flaps projecting behind. Although, however, all were dressed

nearly alike, there was one who evidently took the lead amongst them. He was a young man, and had an air of authority in his manner to which the rest seemed to pay deference. Some differences, too, in his outer habiliments, notwithstanding of the general resemblance that prevailed in this particular, pointed him out as of a superior grade to the others. This person was not unknown to the inmates of the house. He was recognised as Captain Hagedorn of the Jungfrau of Rotterdam—a man of fierce, irascible temper, and an ardent, although not very acceptable, admirer of Juliana. On his entrance, therefore, he was immediately greeted as an acquaintance by Tromp, his wife, and their two daughters—by Juliana, however, with an evident confusion and embarrassment of manner. To these greetings, Hagedorn vouchsafed the return only of a surly and unintelligible muttering, while he proceeded to provide himself with a chair, on which he placed himself directly opposite the one-eyed minstrel, at whom he threw, from time to time, looks of the most malignant ferocity.

All, especially Juliana, who had reasons for fearing the worst, seemed impressed with the belief that the fellow was bent on mischief, and that he had come there for the especial purpose. Of this they were more convinced, on observing the brass-tipped sheaths of cutlasses projecting from beneath the pea-jackets of the intruders. Their fears were not long of being realised.

"Tromp," said Hagedorn (we take the liberty of translating, in this, and all other similar cases), "I thought you kept a regular, decent house. Such is the character you pretend to, at any rate."

"And such," replied Tromp, with a blush of honest indignation, "is the character I maintain. Who shall gainsay it?"

"Why, there are some things going on here to-night that don't look much like it," replied Hagedorn. "Know ye,

Tromp, or does Juliana know, who this one-eyed gallant is?" pointing to the late serenader.

"Whether they do or not, they shall soon know, and so shall you to your cost, Hagedorn!" replied the minstrel, starting to his feet, and hastily stripping off the disguise, eye-patch and all, in which he was enveloped; a proceeding which discovered to the astonished onlookers—not, however, including either Jones or Juliana, who had a previous knowledge of his identity—a tall, handsome, gentlemanly-looking young man, well known as Sir Lionel Musgrave, one of the gayest and most respected of those English gentlemen who shared the misfortunes and exile of Charles II. during the existence of the Commonwealth.

"Ha!" said Hagedorn, starting to his feet, on Musgrave discovering himself. "So, I have unearthed the fox, eh!" And, as he spoke, he made a grasp at Musgrave's throat; which the latter evaded by adroitly stepping back a pace, when he instantly drew his sword and made a pass at Hagedorn, who, however, skilfully warded it off with his cutlass, to which he had had recourse the moment he missed his hold of his antagonist. These proceedings were, of course, a signal to all the other men in the apartment to muster on their respective sides; and this they instantly did. Hagedorn's men immediately drew; Jones and his party did the same; and the women ran screaming from the scene of the impending contest. In one instant after, a general melée commenced. There were deep oaths, overturning of tables, and clashing of swords in every direction, and all the other characteristics of a tremendous and very serious hubbub. Blows, too, were not wanting. They fell thick and fast on all sides.

Hitherto our friend the laird had remained an idle, but sufficiently-astonished spectator of the strange and sudden scene that had been thus brought before his visual organs. Though an idle, he was not altogether, however, a mute witness of the proceedings that were going forward.

"'Od! this *is* a queer business!" he muttered to himself. "Wha on earth wad hae thocht that yon blin-ee'd, broken-doon-lookin soul o' a fiddler wad hae turned oot a braw young swanky like that? Na, na, that'll no do," suddenly added the laird, and now referring to the circumstance of Jones being hard pressed by two of the intruders. "Twa on ane—that'll never do." And the laird looked around him for some weapon wherewith he might compensate the odds against his friend. Nothing of this kind more efficient than the tongs presenting itself, the laird leaped down from the table on which he had been perched in the quality of musician, and, seizing the afore-mentioned instrument by the feet, advanced upon the foe, shouting, "Stan to them, Jones! stan to them, lad! till I gie them a taste o' the tangs!" And, in the same instant, he discharged a blow at the head of one of Jones' assailants that laid him senseless on the floor. Finding his first effort so successful, the laird repeated the experiment on the prostrate man's companion with precisely the same result. Down he went also with a fractured skull. "That's the way!" shouted the laird, now greatly excited by his own destructive exertions; "ca' them down like nine-pins! Soop them aff the face o' the yearth!"

At this moment, the laird's Io Pæans were interrupted by the entrance of a party of the town-guard, whom Tromp had summoned to his aid. These immediately seized on the intruders, as they were pointed out by the latter—the fallen men having so far recovered as to be now sitting up, although evidently sick and giddy from the effects of the laird's blows, and looking, as he said himself, "unco white aboot the gills"—and marched them off to the guard-house, to answer in due time to the judicial authorities of the city for the breach of the peace of which they had been guilty.

On the kitchen of the Drouthsloken being cleared of the enemy, an investigation into the extent of personal injury

sustained took place, when it was found that this was, after all, very trivial, consisting only of two or three slight flesh wounds, of which Musgrave bore two, and one or two others one apiece.

"And now, laird," said Jones, addressing the latter, "what share of the honours have you got?"

"Deil a scratch," replied the laird. "Feth, I didna gie them time for that. I didna stan whilly-whain wi' them, wi' a bit shabble in my haun, as ye a' did, but gied them richt knock-me-doon thuds at ance—sent them owre like stots, ane after the ither. Feth! commen me to a pair o' tangs in a kitchen row. It maks clean wark. I'll think mair o' them as a weapon, baith o' offence and defence, than ever I did."

"In such hands as yours, laird, they certainly are a sufficiently-formidable weapon. Had it it not been for them and you together, I would scarce have got off so scatheless as I have done. I owe you a good turn, and it shall not be forgotten. I promised you an introduction to the king; and I shall not only fulfil that promise, but, as my word goes a long way with him, I shall give such an account of you as, I answer for it, will insure you a favourable reception, and probably procure you some still more substantial tokens of his regard."

"Ou, thank ye, sir, thank ye," said the laird; but I dinna see that I hae dune onything the nicht that should entitle me to ony special favour frae his most gracious Majesty. What interest can he possibly hae in a kitchen collyshangy like this?"

"More than you're aware of, perhaps, laird; but never mind that in the meantime. Here comes Tromp, to read us a lecture, I daresay, on the evening's occurrences, although it was none of our fault either. Ha, Musgrave, my spark!" continued Jones, and now turning to that gallant —"didst think I couldn't have known thee? 'Od's fish,

man, I would have known the cut of thy jib, although thou hadst been sewn in a sack."

"Faith, your ——" A wink from Jones prevented the word that was about to follow. The wink was understood. "Faith, my friend," said Musgrave, laughing, "to tell a truth, I had no idea you were here. It was intended for a stolen march—to see whether I could not win my wager, by cutting ye out in the good graces of our landlord's fair daughter July." The conversation between Jones and Musgrave was here interrupted by the approach of Tromp, who came not, as the latter had suspected, to complain of what had occurred, but merely to request that the gentlemen would now retire, as it was getting late, and as his household was in a state of great alarm and confusion, in consequence of what had taken place.

The request was too respectfully made, and in itself too reasonable, to admit of the smallest objection. The party immediately donned their hats and cloaks, when Jones, taking the laird by the hand, told him to remain where he was for the night, and that he would wait upon him on the following morning to conduct him to the king.

Agreeably to his promise, early in the forenoon of the following day, Jones, attended by a gay band of cavaliers, entered the apartment in which the laird was at breakfast.

"Oh, Mr Jones, hoo are ye?" said the latter, rising from his seat on the entrance of the former. "I'm sure this is very guid o' ye. Nane the waur o' the bit stramash we had last nicht, I hope?"

"Oh! not a bit, not a bit, kind thanks to you for that, laird," replied Jones. "Now, my friend," continued the latter, "I am better than my word: I promised to bring you to the king; instead of this, I have brought the king to you. Any objection, laird, to take me for your lawful, but unfortunate king? I am Charles," he said, in a tone of more earnest emphasis.

Need we describe the laird's amazement at this astounding disclosure? We need not. The reader will conceive it. Although he looked unutterable things, all that he said was—

'Gude preserve me! is that a fact?" pronounced in the slow, deliberate tone of overwhelming and perplexed amazement.

The sequel of our tale is soon told. Charles settled a small pension on the laird—all that his circumstances at the time would afford—on which he lived for several years at the Hague. He subsequently found his way back to Scotland, the distracted state of the king's affairs preventing the regular payment of his pension. In the meantime, years rolled on, and changes took place, and amongst these came the Restoration. Charles was restored to the throne of his ancestors. On this throne the monarch had not been many days seated, when he was informed by one of the pages in waiting that they had been much annoyed by an old grey-headed Scotchman, with a large flat blue bonnet on his head, insisting on admission to His Majesty's presence.

"Did he give his name?" replied the monarch.

"He did, please your majesty," replied the page; "he said he was sure that, if we would inform your majesty that it was the Laird of Lucky's How who sought admission, your majesty would instantly grant him an audience.

"He was right," said Charles, smiling. "I recollect the honest man well. Admit him next time he presents himself."

The laird came, was admitted, and was received with a most cordial welcome by the good-natured monarch. They talked over the occurrences of the evening they had spent in the kitchen of the Drouthiloken; and the laird was finally dismissed, with a promise, shortly afterwards redeemed, of his being reinstated in his patrimonial lands. To this other gratuities were added, to an amount that amply compen-

sated him, as he often himself said, for all that he had suffered in the royal cause. Some will say, perhaps, and with too much truth, that Charles was not so grateful to all his friends; but, in the present instance, we have only to do with the case of the Laird of Lucky's How.

THE ABDUCTION.

The farm of Kelpiehaugh, at a short distance from Lessudden, was, at an early period of the St Boswell's meetings, occupied by Giles Ramsay—a man who, as often happens in Scotland, was not loth to admit that "his grey mare was the better horse." He liked the philosophy of the old ballad quoted by Shakspere, and received it as a general maxim, that "nought's to be had at a woman's hand" unless, in every case, "ye gie her a' the plea." And, verily, Matty did not love him the worse for his correct notions of woman-kind, though, as for anything like gratitude for his easy submission to her entire authority, she knew nothing of the sentiment, if she did not heartily despise it. The reason was indeed plain enough; for she had the capacity to know that, whatever superiority nature intended her husband should possess over her, in his character of one of the lords of the creation, he had none whatever in the capacity of her husband. In this there was a secret which she communicated to no one; and that was simply, that Giles was, in all respects, a stupid, simple, honest "cudden," and she was one of the cleverest dames that ever made a good-natured husband cry "barlafummil" in a matrimonial skirmish. Yet, with all the guidwife's cleverness, she had not been able either to prevent Giles from getting behind with his rent—the more by token as, we fancy, that Kelpiehaugh was too dear—or to get "the glaikit hizzy," Mary, her daughter, well buckled to a canny laird, who might help them to pay up their arrears. The first was clearly no marvel; but the second might have been termed some-

what extraordinary, seeing the young woman was as fair as Dowsabell.

Something as regarded the rent depended upon the next sale of cattle at St Boswell's, for which honest Giles had ready six as good stirks as ever grazed on a green lea; and it was arranged between him and the better partner of the matrimonial firm, that he must get six pounds for every head of them, otherwise he might have small chance for "love's roundelay" on his return.

"It will mak thirty-six pounds, Giles, said Matty; "and that will enable us to pay up ten pounds o' oor arrears."

"And what will I get for a superplus o' a pound a-head on them?" said Giles.

"The liberty to buy a new gown for Mary," replied she, "that we may try to get her aff at the next fair. But, if ye sell them for a pound less, I rede ye to seek a quieter bield for your hame than Kelpiehaugh will be on your return."

And so primed, old Giles set off with his six stirks to St Boswell's. He arrived at the green, and exposed his bestial in the most favourable manner he could; but he found that Matty's price did not accord with the humour of the buyers, who probably thought proper to judge for themselves in the question of value. The time passed, and Giles saw before him nothing but the necessity of driving the stirks back again to Kelpiehaugh—an operation he by no means relished. As he stood musing on the apparently forlorn hope of a customer, an old man, much bent, with a grey beard, and a patch over his left eye as big as the blind of him of forging celebrity, "Blackpatch" himself, came up to him, and at once offered him eight pounds a-head for his stock. The old farmer wondered, smiled, and accepted. The bargain was struck, and forty-eight good pounds were instanter placed in the hands of the seller.

"Now I have a favour to ask of you, good Mr Ramsay," said the buyer.

"It will be an unreasonable request I winna grant to ane wha has gien me my ain price," replied the farmer. "What is't?"

"That you will drive the cattle home to Kelpiehaugh, and keep them there at my risk and cost till I send for them," said the other.

"Granted, and wi' thanks," said the farmer.

"I have another favour to ask," said the other.

"As mony's ye like, sir, if they're a' o' a kind," answered the farmer, smiling. "Out wi't."

"That you'll give me a bed at Kelpiehaugh to-night," said the old man. "I have a distance to ride, and would fain halve the stage, by making your house a half-way resting-place.

"Of a surety, sir," replied the farmer; "ye'll hae the best bed and the best victuals Kelpiehaugh can boast o', and nae boast after a', though Matty, I am proud to say, kens hussyskep as weel as ony woman in a' the shirradom. Will ye gang wi' me, or come yersel?"

"I will come by myself," said the buyer. "I have some other affairs to settle before the fair breaks up, and it may be later than your time before I have finished."

The matter being thus arranged, the two parted. Giles was anxious to know who his customer was; but no one could tell anything of him, and the hour getting forward to the gloaming, he set off again for his farm, with his forty-eight pounds in his pocket, and the cattle before him. On his approaching Kelpiehaugh, Matty, along with her fair daughter, was at the door, waiting for him. It was now dark; but she could hear his voice in articulations which pleased her not. "Hey! hey! yaud! yaud!" and then came the sound of a thwack on the backs of the lazy troop he was driving before him.

"And ye've brought them back again, ye sorry simpleton?" cried the wife.

The husband answered nothing, but continued thumping at the nolt with his "hey," and "yaud," and "phew"—every ejaculation having the effect of an objurgatory attack on the dame herself.

"Ay, ay," she cried, "thump them and drive them into the shed, Giles, that they may be ready for the roup o' our plenishing and stocking. The auctioneer's hammer will knock them down wi' mair pith than that rung ye are using, wi' a' the spite o' an angry disappointed man, wha couldna mak a sale o' his ain kye."

Her cutting words had still no effect upon the good-natured farmer, who continued his operations till he got the six steers safely lodged in their shed. He then came into the house quietly, and, with a "heigh-ho, that job's weel owre," sat him down by the side of the fire, opposite to his wife and daughter. For some minutes there was silence in the house of Kelpichaugh; the reason whereof was that Matty's authority was for once apparently disregarded, or set at naught, by the apparent absence of all tokens of fear and contrition on the part of her mate. She had already indicated sufficiently her sense of his stupidity, and given him a peremptory notice of what he might expect for the next half-year to come; yet there was he, against all custom, and all the laws of marital subordination, sitting as easy and comfortable as if he merited her praise and deserved her blessing. She could only look daggers at him, with occasionally an expression of staring wonder at a nonchalance that disproved twenty years of authority.

"Is there naething in Kelpichaugh for its master to eat or drink?" said he, at last, in a calm, soft voice. "A hard day's wark deserves something at e'en."

"Is he adding impertinence to his folly?" thought the dame, as she sat doggedly silent and immoveable.

"Come, Mary," added he; "since Matty will gie us naething, rise, lassie, and gie your father the best that's in the

house, and, by way o' bribe, here's a new gown to ye—the bonniest and brawest I could find at St Boswell's."

The girl started up and laid hold of the dress. The bright hues glared on her eyes. The dame cast a side-eye on the gaudy article.

"Waur and waur, Giles," she ejaculated. "Are ye mad, man? What, in the name o' a' that's guid or ill, possessed ye? Will that gown pay our rent?"

"Maybe it may," rejoined Giles. "Mary's the bonniest lass on this side o' the Tweed, and beauty's nae waur o' being weel buskit. It may bring her a husband wha'll pay our rent; and, if it doesna, there's nae skaith, seeing we may yet be able to do it oursels."

"The man's as mad as a March hare, or a gled-stung quey," cried Matty.

"But am I to get nae supper, Matty?" rejoined he, with the same calmness.

"The deil a bit," ejaculated the dame.

"Maybe this may bribe ye," said he, as he pulled out of another pocket a gown-piece, as bright as the other, for his beloved spouse.

The charm had no power, save that of increasing the wonder of the dame; and the statement which immediately followed, that there was a stranger to be entertained at Kelpichaugh that night, roused her still farther. It was not till she began to look more narrowly into the face of her husband, that she observed a dry humour about him, that might be anything but the result of an unsuccessful attempt to dispose of his bestial, and, going up to him, she shook him heartily by the shoulders.

"Come, come, Giles," she said, "there's a secret at the bottom o' a' this, and maybe this may explain it."

And, seizing his pocket-book, she opened it, and pulled forth the bunch of notes. They were counted on the instant, and the eyes of the dame brightened up at every ad-

dition to the calculation. The farmer explained all, and, in the course of his narration, Matty's wonder waxed great again. She was not altogether satisfied. She looked at the notes, to see that they were not forged; glanced at Giles; fell into a brown study; looked at Mary; hemmed and heyed; and began to make preparations for the stranger. In about an hour afterwards, the old customer arrived, was ushered in to the fire, and took his seat, while Giles went to look to the putting-up of his horse, which, he observed, was as clever and clean-limbed a creature as that which carried the "fair ladye" and "true Thomas" over the Eildon Hills. The supper was, in the meantime, in the act of being served up. The old man coughed and told stories, Mary listened, and Matty eyed her guest with a peculiar expression, which made him rub his beard, cough more and more, and retire farther into the recess which he had taken possession of. Nor would the supper draw him forth; for he said he had supped before he came, yet had he no objection to drink the ale which Matty handed him, and was as merry as an old man might be, who had seen so many summers as his beard betokened. Many a thing they talked of, but they all concerned the farmer, and his wife and daughter; for the never a word would he say of himself, either as to what he was, or where he lived—the dry skeleton of a name, Mr Farquharson, being all he gratified them with, while, in return, he asked so much of the condition and doings of his host and family, that one might have thought he intended either to pay their arrears of rent, or marry the daughter, at the very least. The supper, of which he partook not, being done, he said he wished not to put them about in their arrangements, and would be very well pleased to lie in the small bed behind him, unless that were set apart for some other of the family.

"That ye may weel hae, sir," said Matty on the instant, "if ye hae a fancy to it. A sma' reward for the guid price

ye gae for the cattle. Mary can sleep for a nicht in the kitchen—for Jenny is at St Boswell's, and winna be hame before the morn."

"You will have only one night's trouble of me," replied the old man; "but you may have more of the cattle—eight at least—and I think I will better pay you beforehand, Mr Ramsay, that there may be no mistake when the men come to take them away."

And he put into the farmer's hand three times the sum he would have demanded for the keeping of the steers. The farmer would have refused the money, but Matty, whose by-play all along had been unnoticed by her husband, pinched him on the arm, and the words of rejection died away in his mouth. The parties afterwards retired to bed, leaving the strange visiter in the apartment allotted to him.

"I never did a better day's wark, guidwife," said the farmer to his partner, when they went up-stairs.

"Hush! hush! man, ye dinna ken what ye have done," replied she; and the next moment she was busy whispering something in the ear of the farmer. He started instantly, cried, "Impossible, impossible!" and stood for a moment in dismay and consternation. But Matty gave him no time for thought. She was again busy with his ear; and the next exhibition he made was of an opposite character—a strange expression was upon his face, and he slapped her upon the back in the extravagance of a feeling that, whether betokening good-humour or not, seemed to have no bounds. In a short time, the house was as quiet as Grimalkin himself could have wished it, when bent on a hunting foray. All had apparently gone to bed, and the stillness continued till considerably after midnight. A slow tap at the kitchen-door showed that one individual at least was astir.

"Mary, Mary, are you awake?" said a voice, that at least was uninterrupted by a cough.

The answer was a whisper from within. After some parley, the door was opened, and a series of secret doings, among which the opening of the outer door of the house, a recourse to the stable, the saddling of the fleet horse, and other furtive preparations for a departure, were the most important. During all this time, the figure of a female wrapped in a cloak stood in the recess of the door. The horse was quietly walked to the loan, and the mantled figure glided as secretly as a ghost, who knows that the pimp Gallus will shortly awaken, to the starting-post. One swing brought her to the pad, and another placed before her one whom the light of the faint moon exhibited without a bend in his body or beard on his chin. Away they set—

> "On, on they rade, and farther on—
> The steed gaed swifter than the wind—
> Until they reach'd a desert wide,
> And living land was left behind."

Not a word passed between the couple. The one was occupied spurring on the steed, and the other clung to him, as if love had nerved her arms, and made them as tenacious of the grasp of his waist as Lenora, of German celebrity, was of the soulless body of her Wilhelm. Sometimes he slackened his pace, to ascertain whether the guidman of Kelpiehaugh was up and away in quest of runaway bride, like the Græmes after the heiress of Netherby, over Cannobie-lee; and then, when he thought he heard the clatter of a horse's hoof, he applied the spur again, and away they went, over moss and muir, with such speed as love and fear in the rider may alone impart to the obedient steed. At other times, the space of a few minutes was devoted to soft whispers, and the gallant pressed the encircling arms of his fair one, and sighed as he felt her embrace as tight as a lover's heart could wish. He was as happy as one who is on the verge of the enjoyment of stolen pleasures

can be in a world where lawful indulgences had no zest for him; and he turned his head for the muffled kiss, which was granted as freely as any rieving lover, even Lochinvar himself or Jock o' Hazeldean, could have desired. Nor less was he pleased with the pressure of her fair arms, which accompanied or followed the other demonstrations of her affection, and the speed of his steed, now safe, as he thought himself, from all pursuit, was quickened, that he might reach the goal, where all the joys of a long-sighed-for possession awaited him. At length he gave his horse breathing-time, and, taking himself a long inspiration—

"When, think ye, Mary," said he, "I will send for the six steers I purchased from your father yesterday?"

"Maybe never, Robert," was the whispered reply.

"You say right, love. It was never my intention," said he. "I thought it but fair to leave old Giles some consideration for his daughter."

A squeeze was the expression of the gratitude felt by the female for the boon so generously bestowed on the farmer of Kelpichaugh.

"Was I known, think ye?" he continued. "I liked not the sharp eye of your mother. By my faith! I quailed under it. The devil an ancient carlin duenna in an old romance ever observed so sharp a look-out for the safety of her ward. But, ha! ha! Mary, we have outwitted the old dame, and let her catch us now, if she can. We want only two miles of Langholm, and then, hey! hey! and be merry, as the song says—

> 'Now all this time let us be merry,'
> And set nocht by this world a cherry.'

Safe in my house at Langholm, Mary, let Giles and his old dame enjoy the bargain they have got. They may sell the steers at the next fair of St Boswell's; but I will not so soon part with my Mary."

"Na, I hope not," replied the whispering female. "But hearna ye the sounds of a horse's feet?"

The lover turned his head.

"Your father, by the rood!" cried he; and, clapping spurs again to his horse, they set off at a quick gallop, with a view to distance their pursuer, who was no other than Giles Ramsay himself, mounted on one of his quickest plough-horses, and brandishing a huge cudgel, in the double act of beating his nag and threatening vengeance on the fugitives.

The pursued were now in danger of being overtaken; for the greater speed of the hunter was counterbalanced by the greater burden, and it was clearly a cast-up whether they would be able to escape the vengeance that awaited them. But, whatever might be the issue, there was no want of energy in either hand or heel of the abductor; and he lashed and spurred his steed more furiously as his fears increased—

> "Still looking the sidelong woods among,
> Before, around him, and behind;
> And aye, whene'er the echo rung,
> The steed flew swifter than the wind."

And no less energetic was the fearful pursuer, whose hearty thwacks upon the curpan of his shaggy cart-tracer, mixed with loud halloos, might be heard in the distance, awakening the echoes of the silent night. The lover relished not the appearance, and still less the cries, of the lusty farmer; and as little apparently did his companion—who, as the horse increased his speed, grasped her abductor round the waist—wish to fall into the hands of the enraged pursuer. Away they scoured, and, "Fear not, Mary—love will distance the old churl," fell from the lips of the panting lover, in reply to the inspiring pressure of her arms; while, "Na, na, Robert, flee for the love o' heaven," added more energy to the spur, and more passion to his breast. They reached

the skirts of the woody Langholm; but it was not the abductor's intention to stop at his residence, while he was in danger of being overtaken; so, striking to the left, and dashing into a *corrie*, or deep lirk of a hill, he stretched on with the flight of desperation. His wish was to clear the fern brae, as the height was called, and, getting into the thick wood at the back, make a sudden turn, and elude the quick eye of the farmer; but the latter kept dashing and bounding on, hallooing in the distance, and still brandishing his oaken ryss, in the most fearful demonstrations of a vengeance that would be contented with nothing less, apparently, than the body of the one, and the life of the other. Still the fond female turned her eyes behind, and, giving her companion reports of the progress of the pursuer, kept up his energies and alive his spirit.

"All the work of that accursed old duenna, your mother," muttered he.

"Ay, ay, nae doot, nae doot," rejoined she, and hugged him again more closely than ever. The turn of the fern hill did not seem, however, to bring the relief which it promised, for the couple were still within hail of the redoubted Giles; and his shouting reverberated among the rocks like the tally-ho of the hunter, or rather like the deep-mouthed bay of the pack.

But here a more extraordinary phenomenon presented itself, and that was an accession of strength to the sturdy Giles of no fewer than three horsemen, who, probably attracted by his war-whoop, had tendered their services in endeavouring to overtake and seize the fugitives. This circumstance was proclaimed by a united cry of the whole pursuers, which rung in the ears of the lover like the howl which met the Florentine on his visit to the region of the wicked in Hades. There was, however, more in the appearance of the strangers, as seen in the light of the now bright moon, than in their war-shout that carried dismay

to the breast of the abductor. What this was, he told not; but his muttering of "Who can have brought him and his servants to this part of the country at this time?" satisfied his companion that he knew the individuals who had thus opportunely joined the cause of the farmer; and now, if indeed that were possible, he urged his panting steed forward at a still quicker pace. His chance of escape was diminishing every moment. The horses of the assistants were fleeter than those of the farmer; and, if he did not succeed in overtaking the fugitives, it was too evident that they would accomplish for him the object he had in view. The lover seemed doubtful what he should do—whether still to press on, lay down his charge, or make a sweep round the hill, and take refuge in Langholm. A clump of trees now intervening between him and the party, he appeared to resolve suddenly on the last manœuvre; and his reason probably was, that he might have time to secrete his fair one among some of the outhouses of the mansion before the pursuers came up. Acting upon this resolution, he turned the head of his horse, swept in by the tail of the height, struck into a loan, and, after a rapid run of a few minutes, was opposite to the house of Langholm.

"Quick! quick, Mary! jump and follow me," he cried, as he took her in his arms. "This way," and he flew first to one door and then another. They were shut, and he had no alternative left but to take his fair charge into the mansion itself. Rushing up-stairs, and dragging after him his abducted love, he reached a small bedroom, thrust her into it, shut the door, locked it, and returned to face boldly his pursuers. By the time he arrived at the landing-place, his horse had sought the stable; and there was no apparent sign, save his appearance there at that hour, of his having been engaged in the unlawful undertaking for which he had been so hotly pursued.

"I have paid well for my love-errantry," said he, as he

took a handkerchief, and wiped the sweat from his face. "There is not another beauty in Scotland for whom I would have toiled as I have now done. Have I given them the slip? Mayhap I may, unless I am right in that fearful conjecture, suggested by the appearance of my strange pursuers."

"Ho, there!" cried the voice of a man, rushing up on horseback. "What is this, Robert?"

"My father!" ejaculated the youth; "what has brought you from Craigton at this hour?"

"Robert! Robert!" ejaculated a voice from a bedroom window, at that moment drawn up—"why have you placed a woman in my bedroom, and locked her in?"

"Is that you, my love?" rejoined the father, in answer to the cry of his wife. "Why, here is some infernal mystery. Your mother and I arrived here to-day. We heard you were at St Boswell's, and I left her here that I might go and join you at the market. Now I have returned to witness a scene that baffles all my wits. Here is a man who has a claim upon you which your mother corroborates by her extraordinary inquiry."

The cavalcade at that moment came up—Giles in the rear, still brandishing his rung, and muttering incoherent threats against the abductor. The youth was surrounded: his father cried for information, his mother screamed from the window, Giles demanded restitution, and the voice of the abducted female was heard in shrill tones over all.

"Ha! Matty, lass, this is sad wark," cried the farmer, on recognising the voice of his wife.

"Is it possible, Robert Melville," said the father, "that you could disgrace your family and your pedigree, by carrying off the wife of this honest farmer—a woman stricken in years—and place her in the bedroom occupied by your mother?"

"It's owre true," cried Giles, with something like a sup-

pressed laugh. "I see her face at the window. He came to Kelpiehaugh habited as an auld man, wi' a grey beard stuck on his chin, and a scratch wig on his head; and, in return for a supper and a bed, carried aff my helpmate, wi' whom I hae lived, in love and honour, for thirty years."

The scene was getting more extraordinary. The young man was sceptical of the truth of Giles' statement; but he could not disprove it by stating what he conceived to be the veritable fact—that he had run away with Mary, the young daughter of the farmer of Kelpiehaugh. He looked at the latter, then turned up his eyes to the window, where he then saw only the face of his mother. Her cries still rung in his ears; the father called for the key; Giles insisted on the truth of his statement; and the inquiries of the servants mingled with the general confusion. By an impulse he could not resist, he gave his father the key; the door was opened, and the mother, who was now dressed, came down-stairs, along with her husband, followed by the female, on whom they turned eyes in which wonder and indignation alternated their suitable expressions. The female threw back her hood.

"We hae had a lang and a hard ride, Mr Melville," said she. "My feth, ye did weel, but your horse did better; and, Giles, man, ye did as I never saw ye do before."

"I couldna want ye, Matty," replied Giles; "and, if I havena testified my love for ye by this nicht's wark, never a man in Scotland ever proved his affection for his wife."

The absence of all ill-humour, the winks which Matty directed to the wonderstruck youth, and his apparent amazement, added to the puzzle which perplexed the minds of the father and the mother.

"What does all this mean, Robert?" cried the mother.

"For God's sake, explain this extraordinary affair!" rejoined the father.

The youth was still mute. At length Matty whispered

something in his ear. He spoke for the first time since the scene commenced.

"It may be as you say, Mrs Ramsay," said he.

"Aweel, it's a' richt," replied she; "but it may please Giles and mysel if ye will acknowledge it in the presence o' your father and mother."

"I have no objections," replied he; and, turning to his parents, who understood not one word of all this dialogue, and far less of the strange scene still acting around them, he added, "I hereby declare, in presence of you, as witnesses, that I hereby renounce all claim ——"

"To whom?" cried the mother; "to another man's wife —an aged matron? Fie, Robert! Say no more. Close the lips that would dishonour a son in presence of his parents."

"I hereby renounce all claim to six stirks at present lying at the farm of Kelpichaugh, and promise never to trouble Giles Ramsay for the same."

"It's a' settled and adjusted," cried Matty. "I am satisfied; and Giles, I fancy, you are no ill-pleased wi' my nicht's wark?"

"I dinna ken which o' us hae dune best," replied the farmer. "Between us, our arrears o' rent will be paid up. My bargain was guid; but I freely admit yours is better."

"Then this affair is at last arranged?" said the youth.

The farmer assented. The worthy couple bade adieu to their friends, and proceeded on their way to Kelpichaugh. We cannot tell what explanations took place at Langholm between the young man and his parents; neither can we tell precisely the import of the conversation that took place between the farmer and his wife on their journey homewards; but we strongly suspect they enjoyed a hearty laugh at the clever manœuvre of the dame. It is probable that Giles himself was in the secret; at least the good-humour he exhibited in getting again possession of his spouse would lead us to believe that he had been a willing

party in the plot that had been so cleverly laid and executed. How far the daughter was to blame has not been recorded; and, to do justice to the farmer and his wife, they never taxed her with indiscretion. She was some time afterwards married, and so put beyond the power of the wild youth who had been so completely foiled by the genius of a clever dame.

SIR PATRICK HUME.

A TALE OF THE HOUSE OF MARCHMONT.

Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth was elected representative of the County of Berwick in the year 1665, being then in the twenty-fifth year of his age. He was a lover of freedom, a lover of his country, and a staunch Presbyterian. In those days, however, a love of freedom was a dangerous principle either to avow or to carry into Parliament. The tyrant Charles, whom some falsely call the Merry Monarch, was then attempting to rule the empire with a rod of iron. You have all heard of his Long Parliament, and of his afterwards governing the country, like an absolute tyrant, without a Parliament at all. Fettered and servile as parliaments then were, young Hume had boldly stood forward as the advocate of civil and religious liberty; and, when the arbitrary monarch sent down a mandate to Scotland for a levy of men and of money, that he might carry his plans of despotism the more effectually into execution, Sir Patrick resisted the slavishness with which it was about to be obeyed.

"What!" exclaimed he, "are we mere instruments in the hands of the king—creatures appointed to minister to his pleasure? Are we not representatives of the people of Scotland—the representatives of their wants and their wishes, and the defenders of their rights? And shall we, as such, at the mere nod of a monarch, drag them from following their plough in the valley, or attending their hirsels on the hill—shall we do these things, and lay contributions on their cattle, on their corn, and on their coffers, merely because His Majesty wills it? Pause, my countrymen. The king

has no authority to compel such a measure, and it can only be rendered legal by the concurrence of the assembled representatives of the people."

"Treason!" vociferated the Duke of Lauderdale, who was the arch-minion of Charles; "before the Parliament of Scotland, I denounce Sir Patrick Hume as a dangerous man —as a plotter against the life and dignity of our sovereign lord the king!"

"What!" exclaimed Sir Patrick, indignantly fixing his eyes upon Lauderdale. "Though there may be amongst us a slave who would sell his country for a royal smile, I still hope that this is a FREE Parliament, and it concerns all the members to be FREE in what concerns the nation."

From that day, Sir Patrick Hume became a suspected man, and the eyes of the king's creatures were upon him; and when, two years afterwards, Charles endeavoured to put down the people by the sword, and establish garrisons throughout the country, again the Laird of Polwarth stood foremost in the ranks of opposition, and resisted his power. The king accordingly ordered his privy council to crush so dangerous a spirit; and Sir Patrick was confined in Stirling Castle, where, with the exception of a short interval, he was imprisoned for two years.

Britain had long been distracted with the pretended discovery of fabulous or ridiculous plots against the royal family; and the perjury of paid miscreants, like the infamous Titus Oates, was causing the scaffolds to run with gore. But tyranny being glutted with Catholic blood, and the extinguishing of what were called Popish plots, the myrmidons of Charles (who lived a libertine, and died a Papist) professed that they had discovered a Protestant plot against his royal person. In this plot the incorruptible Algernon Sydney, Lord Russell, Mr Bailie of Jerviswoode, and Sir Patrick Hume, were included. They beheld their common country withering and wasting beneath the grasp of a tyrant;

and true it is they had united together to restore it to freedom, but they were innocent of designs against his life, or even of a wish to dethrone him. They did not, however, act sufficiently in concert, and were unable to bring their plans into operation. A price was set upon their heads—some fled into exile, and others sought refuge on the mountain and in the wilderness; while the amiable Russell died upon the scaffold.

It was near nightfall, in the month of September, 1684, when Jamie Winter, who was joiner on the estate of Polwarth, ran breathless up to Redbraes Castle, and knocked loudly at the door. It was opened by John Allan, the landsteward, who, perceiving his agitation, inquired—

"In the name o' guidness, Jamie, what's happened, or what do ye want?"

"Dinna ask, Maister Allan," replied Jamie; "but, for Heaven's sake, tell me, is Sir Patrick at hame? and let me speak to him presently, as ye value his life."

"Follow me, then, Jamie," said the other, "and come in quietly, that the servants mayna observe onything extraordinar; for we live in times when a man canna trust his ain brither."

The honest joiner was ushered into a room where Sir Patrick sat in the midst of his family, acting at once as their schoolmaster and their playmate.

"Weel, James," said the laird, "I understand ye hae been at Berwick the day. Ye've got early back. What uncos heard ye there?"

"I watna, Sir Patrick," replied the other; "now-a-days, I think, there's naething unco that can happen. Satan seems to have been let loose on our poor misgoverned country. But I wish to speak to your honour very particularly, and in private, if you please."

"You may speak on, James," said the laird; "I am private in the midst o' my ain family."

"Wi' your guid leave, sir," returned the cautious servant, "I wad rather the bairns were oot o' the way, for what I hae to say is no proper for them to hear, and the sooner ye are acquainted wi' it the better."

Sir Patrick led his younger children out of the room, but requested Lady Polwarth and their eldest daughter, Grizel, a lovely dark-haired girl, about twelve years of age, to remain.

"You are the bearer of evil tidings, James," said he, as he returned, "but you may tell them now—it is meet that my wife should hear them, if they concern me; and," added he, taking Grizel's hand in his, "I keep no secrets from my little secretary."

"God bless her!" said James, "she's an auld-farrant bairn, as wise as she's bonny, I ken that. But, your honour, I am, indeed, the bearer of evil tidings. A party o' troopers arrived at Berwick this morning, and it was nae secret there that they would be baith at Jerviswoode and Redbraes before midnicht. I heard them talk o' the premium that was set upon your life, and slipped out o' the town immediately, without performing a single transaction, or speaking a word to a living creature. How I've got alang the road is mair than I can tell; for I was literally sick, blind, and desperate wi' grief. I've this minute arrived, and whatever can be done to save you maun be done instantly."

Lady Polwarth burst into tears. Sir Patrick grasped the hand of his faithful servant. Little Grizel gazed in her father's face with a look of silent despair, but neither spoke nor wept.

"Oh, fly! fly instantly, my dear husband!" cried Lady Polwarth, "and Heaven direct you."

"Be composed, my love," said Sir Patrick; "I fear that flight is impossible; but some means of evading them may perhaps be devised."

"Oh, my leddy," said Jamie Winter, "to flee is out o' the

question athegither. Government has its spies at every turn o' the road—in every house in the country—even in this house. Our only hope is to conceal Sir Patrick; but how or where is beyond my comprehension."

Many were the schemes devised by the anxious wife—many the suggestions of her husband, and honest Jamie proposed numerous plans—but each was, in its turn, rejected as being unsafe. More than an hour had passed in these anxious deliberations; within three hours more, and the king's troops would be at his gate. Grizel had, till now, remained silent, and dashing away the first tear that rolled down her cheek, she flung her arms around her father's neck, and exclaimed, in an eager and breathless whisper—

"I ken a place, faither—I ken a place that the king's troopers and his spies will never find out; and I'll stop beside ye, to bear ye company."

"Bless the bairn!" said Sir Patrick, pressing her to his breast; "and where's the place, dearest?"

"The aisle below Polwarth Kirk, faither," returned Grizel. "Nae trooper will find out such a hiding-place; for the mouth's a bit wee hole, and the long grass, and the docks, and the nettles grow owre it, and I could slip out and in without trampling them down; and nacbody would think o' seeking ye there, faither."

Lady Polwarth shuddered, and Sir Patrick pressed the cheek of his lovely daughter to his lips.

"Save us a', bairn!" said Jamie, "there's surely something no earthly about yer young leddyship, for ye hae mair sense than us a' put thegither. The aisle is the very place. I'll steal awa, and hae a kind o' bed put up in it, and tak ither twa or three bits o' necessary things; and, Sir Patrick, ye'll slip out o' the house and meet me there as soon as possible."

Within an hour, Sir Patrick had joined Jamie Winter in

the dark and dismal aisle. The humble bed was soon and silently fitted up, and the faithful servant, wishing his master "farewell," left him alone in his dreary prison-house. Slow and heavily the hours of darkness moved on. He heard the trampling of the troopers' horses galloping in quest of him. The oaths and the imprecations of the riders fell distinctly on his ears. Amidst such sounds he heard them mention his name. But his heart failed not. He knelt down upon the cold damp floor of his hiding-place—upon the bones of his fathers—and there, in soundless, but earnest prayer, supplicated his father's God to protect his family—to save his country—to forgive his persecutors, and to do with him as seemed good in his sight. He arose; and, laying himself upon his cold and comfortless bed, slept calmly. He awoke shivering and benumbed. Faint streaks of light stole into the place of death through its narrow aperture, dimly revealing the ghastly sights of the charnel-house, and the slow reptiles that crawled along the floor. Again night came on, and the shadows of light, if I may use the expression, which revealed his cell, died away. A second morning had come, and a second time the feeble rays had been lost in utter darkness. It was near midnight, and the slender stock of provisions which he had brought with him were nigh exhausted. He started from his lowly couch—he heard a rustling among the weeds at the mouth of the aisle—he heard some one endeavouring to remove the fragment of an old gravestone that covered it.

"Faither!" whispered an eager voice—"faither—it is me—yer ain Grizel!"

"My own, devoted, my matchless child!" said Sir Patrick, stretching his hands towards the aperture, and receiving her in his arms.

She sat down beside him on the bed—she detailed the search of the troopers—she stated that they were watched in their own house—that a spy was set over the very victuals

that came from their table, lest he should be concealed near, and fed by his family.

"But what of that?" continued the light-hearted and heroic girl; "while my plate is supplied, my faither's shall not be empty; and here," added she, laughing—"here is a flask of wine, cakes, and a sheep's-head. But I will tell you a story about the sheep's-head. It was placed on a plate before me at dinner-time. The servant was out o' the room, naebody was looking, and I whupped it into my apron. Little Sandy wanted a piece, and, turning round for it, and missing the head, 'Ah, mother!' he cried, 'our Grizzy has swallowed a sheep's-head, bones and a', in a moment!'—'Wheesht, laddie!' said my mother; 'eat ye next ane then.'—'Oh, ye greedy Grizzy!' said Sandy, shaking his little nieve in my face, 'I'll mind you for this.'—'I'm sure Sandy will ne'er forget me,' said I, and slipped away out to hide the sheep's-head in my own room; and as soon as I thought naebody was astir, I creeped out quietly by the window, and got down here behint the hedges; and I'll come every nicht, faither. But last nicht the troopers were still about the house."

In spite of his misery, Sir Patrick laughed at the ingenuity of his beloved and heroic daughter; then wept and laughed again, and pressed her to his bosom.

He had passed many weeks in this cheerless dungeon, with no companion during the day save a volume of Buchanan's Psalms; but every night he was visited by his intrepid daughter, who at once supplied him with food, and beguiled the hours of his solitude. He was sitting in the gloomy cell, conning over his favourite volume—the stone at the aperture had been pushed aside a few inches to admit the light more freely, and the weeds at the entrance were now bowed down and withered by the frost—a few boys were playing in the churchyard, and tossing a ball against the kirk. Being driven from the hand of an unskilful

player, it suddenly bounded into the aisle. Sir Patrick started, and the book dropped from his hand. Immediately the aperture was surrounded by the boys, and the stone removed. They stood debating who should enter, but none had sufficient courage. At length one more hardy than the rest volunteered to enter, if another would follow him. The laird gave himself up as lost, for he knew that even the tale of a schoolboy would effect his ruin. He was aware he could disperse them with a single groan; but even that, when told to his enemies, might betray him. At length three agreed to enter, and the feet of the first already protruded into the aisle. Sir Patrick crept silently to its farthest corner, when the gruff voice of the old gravedigger reached his ear, shouting—

"The mischief's in the callants, and nae guid. What are ye doing there? Do ye want the ghaists o' the auld Humes aboot yer lugs?"

The boys fled amain, and the old man came growling to the mouth of the aisle.

"The deevil's in the bairns o' Polwarth," said he; "for they wad disturb the very dead in their graves. I'll declare, they've the stane frae the mouth o' the aisle!"

He stooped down, and Sir Patrick saw his grim visage through the aperture, and heard him thus continue his soliloquy, as he replaced the stone—

"Sorrow tak the hands that moved the stane! Ye're hardly worth the covering up again, for ye're a profitless hole to me; and I fancy him that I should lay in ye next, be he whaur he likes, will gang the gate that his freend Bailie gaed yesterday on a scaffold. A gravedigger's a puir bisness, I am sorry to say, in our king's reign; and the fient a ane thrives but the common executioner."

So saying, he enveloped Sir Patrick in utter darkness. That night Grizel and her father left the aisle together, and from her he learned the particulars of what he had heard

muttered by the gravedigger, that his friend, Mr Bailie of Jerviswoode, had been executed the previous day.

Disguised, and in the character of a surgeon, he by by-ways reached London, and from thence fled to France. On the death of Charles, and when the bigot James ascended the throne, Sir Patrick was one of the leaders of the band of patriots who drew their swords in behalf of a Protestant succession.

That enterprise was unsuccessful; and, after contending, almost singlehanded, against the enemies of his religion and his country, he and his family sought refuge in a foreign land. He assumed the name of Dr Peter Wallace, and they took up their abode in Utrecht. There poverty and privations sought and found the exiles. They had parted with every domestic, and the lovely Grizel was the sole servant and helper of her mother, and, when their work was done, the assistant of her father in the education of the younger children; for he had no longer the means of providing them a tutor. Yet theirs was a family of love—a family of happiness; and poverty purified their affections. But their remittances from Scotland were not only scanty but uncertain. Till now Sir Patrick had borne his misfortunes with resignation, and even cheerfulness; he cared not that he was stripped of attendants, and of every luxury of life; yet at times the secret and unbidden tears would start into his eyes, as he beheld his wife and his fair daughter performing, without a murmur, the most menial offices. But the measure of his trials was not yet full—luxuries were not only denied him, but he was without food to set before his children. The father wept, and his spirit heaved with anguish. Grizel beheld his tears, and she knew the cause. She spoke not; but, hastening to her little cabinet, she took from it a pair of jewelled bracelets, and, wrapping herself up in a cloak, she took a basket under her arm, and hurried to the street. The gentle being glided along the

streets of Utrecht, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, and shunning the glance of the passengers, as if each knew her errand. She stood before a shop in which all manner of merchandise was exposed, and three golden balls were suspended over the door. She cast a timid gaze into the shop —thrice she passed and repassed it, and repeated the timid glance. She entered—she placed the bracelets upon the counter.

"How much?" was the laconic question of the shopman.

Grizel burst into tears. He handed her a sum of money across the counter, and deposited the bracelets in his desk. She bounded from the shop with a heart and a step light as a young bird in its first pride of plumage. She hastened home with her basket filled. She placed it upon the table. Lady Polwarth wept, and fell upon her daughter's neck.

"Where have you been, Grizel?" faltered her father.

"Purchasing provisions for a bauble," said she; and the smile and the tear were seen on her cheek together.

But many were the visits which the gentle Grizel had to pay to the Golden Balls, while one piece of plate was pledged after another, that her father, and her mother, and her brethren, might eat, and not die; and even then the table of Sir Patrick, humble as it was, and uncertainly provided for, was open to the needy of his countrymen. Thus three years passed—the memorable 1688 arrived. Sir Patrick was the friend, the counsellor, and supporter of King William—he arrived with him in England—he shared in his triumph. He was created Lord Polwarth, and appointed Sheriff of Berwickshire; and in 1696, though not a lawyer, but an upright man, he was made Lord Chancellor of Scotland, and created Earl of Marchmont, and Lord of Polwarth, Redbraes, and Greenlaw. He was one of the most ardent promoters of the Union; and with it ceased his political career. In 1710, when the Tories came into power, the

earl being the staunchest Whig in Scotland, he was deprived of the office of Sheriff of Berwickshire, but was reinstated in 1715. His lady being dead, he came to take up his residence in Berwick-upon-Tweed; and there, when the heroic Grizel, who was now a wife and a mother (being married to the son of his unfortunate friend, Mr Bailie of Jerviswoode), came with her children and friends to visit him for the last time, as they danced in the hall, though unable to walk, he desired to be carried into the midst of them, and, beating time with his foot—

"See, Grizel," exclaimed the old patriot, "though your father is unable to dance, he can still beat time with his foot."

Shortly after this, he died in Berwick, on the 1st of August, 1724, in the eighty-third year of his age—leaving behind him an example of piety, courage, and patriotism, worthy the imitation of posterity.

THE SERJEANT'S TALES.

THE PACKMAN'S JOURNEY TO LONDON.

At the next opportunity, I got Serjeant Square to resume the narrative of his adventures.

No feeling that the human mind is called upon to sustain (said he) is more depressing than the consciousness of being alone in a strange place without friend or acquaintance—the populous city and the desert are alike lonely. I have been, in the wildernesses of America and in London, the victim of this saddening sensation, and felt it perhaps less keenly when a solitary wanderer in the trackless wilds; for there bodily exertion, and the hopes of soon being in the haunts of men, deadened its force; while, in the populous city, I felt as if I had, after severe suffering and toil, attained an object to me worse than worthless. Amidst the densest crowds, after all, a man can only feel himself truly alone when no hand is held out to him, no eye beams the glance of recognition, and all is strange as a dream. Such were my feelings on the morning after my arrival in Berwick, on my way to London on foot. Fortune had been adverse to me in my native city, Edinburgh—in truth, I had hitherto been her plaything; and, even now, had no definite object in view. Tired of my walk, I had agreed with the captain of a trader for my passage by sea, for the remainder of my journey; and lay upon my bed, awaiting the morning light, a prey to my feelings, and musing upon my chequered fortunes. The wind began gradually to rise and mourn sadly through the windows and in the chimney of the room where I lay. As the morning advanced, the storm increased and raged, so that no vessel could put to sea. After walk-

ing down to the harbour, I returned back to my inn, half resolved not to proceed to the south, but return to Leith in a vessel that was also ready to sail, loaded with grain. I felt myself as if I had been a child, without a will of my own, not caring what became of me. Had I been seized with a mortal disease, I would, I thought, have welcomed death as a relief; so completely had my spirits, somehow or other, become depressed. How I escaped the pressgang, I have often wondered since; for they were very diligent in impressing seamen at this time, and I was in seamen's clothes. Perhaps the fearless manner in which I walked about had led them and the informers to suppose that I had a protection, or was belonging to some ship, and at large on leave of absence.

After breakfast, as I sat conversing with one of the captains about the weather and other trivial matters, a person entered the room with a pack upon his back, and inquired if any of the gentlemen would be so kind as look over his assortment of goods; strongly recommending some silk handkerchiefs.

"No," said the person with whom I was conversing, gruffly. "I want none of your goods. You packmen are all swindling knaves."

"Not all knaves, my good sir. There are knaves in all trades, I allow; but there are honest men, too." And, addressing himself to me, he repeated his request.

His voice at first had sounded in my ears like some well-known sound, and roused my attention; but in vain I endeavoured to call to mind where I had heard it. I had not yet looked towards him; but the instant I did, a mutual recognition took place. He set his pack upon one of the tables of the tap-room. Our hands were clasped in each other's. "Square!" and "Wilson!" were uttered with mutual feelings of joy and surprise. I had met a companion of my early days and sufferings. Often had we spent the

long and chilling winter nights, huddled together to keep each other warm, in the snuggest corner we could find; hungry and ill clothed, often had we shared the precarious morsel of charity with each other, when either could have devoured it all. We had not met since I had first left Edinburgh, many years before; and, if a tear was shed for my mysterious disappearance, it was by Bill Wilson. A glow of pleasure, such as I had never felt before, thawed the icy feeling that had chilled my mind. How delightful must some of the stronger affections be, when the meeting of an early associate can cause so much pleasure! We stood gazing in silence upon each other for some time, ere we could find words to express our feelings. At length they were poured forth in congratulations and kind inquiries. To be alone, we retired to my bedroom, where I gave him a full account of all that had befallen me since we last met, and the present unsettled state of my resolves. He heard me with varying interest, until I had concluded.

"Square," said he, "you have been sorely knocked about, a passive agent, without an object, save to enjoy or suffer the present hour. Now, to succeed, we must have an aim, and hold it in sight, whatever may befall; even should it often elude our grasp, we must not despair or relinquish it for another. My wish is an old age of independence. I may die this night, or I may live until old age has long impaired my energies. To obtain this, my wish, I have, from circumstances, chosen my present calling; nor have I allowed the most adverse fortune to shake my resolve, or change my method of recovering it; for perseverance is the only road that leads to success. Fortune placed you in America at your outset in life. You forsook the path others have trod in with success. You prospered at sea, and threw the golden opportunity away for a whim; a third time you were placed in fortune's way; a dark cloud passed over it; you

gave way to your feelings, and are once more, with years of lost time, where you commenced."

As he spoke, a feeling anything but gratifying passed over my mind. I felt that what he said was strictly true; that I had been living, until now, without an aim, either of avarice or ambition—my thoughts never having extended to the future, nor a care for to-morrow having ever occupied my mind. His cares, again, were all for to-morrow. This difference could not have arisen from education; for in this we were both alike. He, in short, had more prudence. But to proceed. I requested him to give me an account of the manner in which he had lived since we had been separated.

"You know, John," he began, "that we were twins in adversity upon the streets of Edinburgh, equally friendless and penniless. After your departure, I felt for a few days very sad and lonely. I sought you everywhere in vain, and made every inquiry; but who cared aught about a homeless beggar-boy? Had a dog as strangely disappeared, the public crier would have proclaimed him through the streets. I began, young as I was, seriously to reflect upon my desolate situation, and plan in my mind ways to mend it. The childish wishes we had often formed of being rich, and the happy dreams of what we would do if we were so, rose with tenfold force into my memory, and I resolved to be rich; but how to attain my aim was the rub. Wishing, I knew well, brought no gain. It must be toiled for, and steadily pursued. A tradesman I could not hope to be. No one would receive me for my labour during my apprenticeship, and clothe and feed me; and I was too young and weak for labouring work in town or country. There was one way alone open to me—to commence merchant. You may smile at the word; but you shall see. It was not my choice; but what have the poor to do with choice? My object now was to obtain a capital to commence business upon. I was far

from fortunate. It was nearly a month before I had accumulated a groat; yet my labour and anxiety were intense. No gentleman appeared on horseback in the city, whom I did not follow, in anxious hopes to get, by holding his horse, a penny, to increase my capital. In messages I was more indefatigable than usual. No length of space or weight of load daunted me, if a penny was to be earned; but it appeared to my eager mind that the gentlemen, at this time, required less service than usual, and those that employed me were more liberal of their food than halfpence. Still I steadily held on unflinching, adding halfpenny to halfpenny, my mind a prey to a new fear, that of losing my treasure. But I had joys mixed with my fears; for, when I retired to a quiet corner, and counted again and again my increasing store, what a pleasure I felt in adding a halfpenny to it, and carefully wrapping up the paper! When I had reached my eightpence, I could delay my undertaking no longer. I felt I had attained my first step; and, with a feeling of importance to be envied, proceeded to a bookseller's shop, and purchased ballads, of which I got, for my groat, one dozen and three, with a piece of paper to wrap them in, and left the shop, exulting that I was now a merchant, and had goods to dispose of.

"As it was not my intention to sing them on the streets —for from this my pride revolted—I set off in the direction of Lasswade, calling at every door to offer my wares. In two days I had sold off my whole stock, and returned to town for more ballads. After a time, I added other small books, and my trade prospered amazingly. My living cost me nothing; my voice was good, and a supper and bed to the pedlar-boy, were the purchase of my songs, at the cottar's or the farmer's ingle. During the first year my two groats had grown to nearly a pound, and my ambition had grown with it. Pins, tapes, and thread were added to my store; my excursions were extended, and Bill Wilson was a known and

a welcome guest over the whole county of Mid-Lothian. My toil was great, but my strength seemed to increase with my load. I had now in view my second step in advance, a horse and cart to carry my load. Years had passed on; my pack, worth twenty pounds, was all my own, and I had two pounds in my pocket; it was far on in the year, and the day was short and louring. I had some goods bespoke for a bridal, which required to be delivered on the following day. My route lay over the Soutra Hill; and had the weather kept up, my task was easy of accomplishment — so I cheerily plodded on, counting my gains; but scarce had I reached the ascent, when the wind began to moan along the dreary waste, and thin flakes of snow to fall, while the blast, from the east, blew right in my face. I quickened my pace; but the storm increased before I reached the top, the drifting snow blinding me, and the fitful gusts almost lifting me off my feet. Cold and biting as was the air, I was wet with perspiration, from my load and my struggles against the blast. I could not see two yards before me; I was truly alone in the howling waste, yet I yielded not to despondency, but struggled on for life. I had, it seemed, deviated from the road, for all was now a trackless waste, when suddenly I stumbled and fell on the edge of a declivity, and my pack, the whole of my wealth, bounded from me, in what direction I knew not. It was vain to look for it in such a situation, in such a storm; but what is wealth under such circumstances, when life is scarcely to be hoped for?

"When I recovered my feet, I was bruised, and began to chill. Hope of escape had nearly fled; despondency was stealing fast upon me; but life is sweet, and so I urged on, as much to overcome the intense cold I felt, as with any hope of finding a shelter from the pitiless storm. The magnitude of my loss never once entered my mind in this struggle for existence. I would have given all the remainder of my hard earnings for the sight of a cottage, in which

to preserve my life. In this, my hour of need, I was snatched from death. As I stood, unable to move a step farther, and on the point of sinking upon the snow, to rise no more, the sound of a dog, barking loudly, fell upon my ear. There was life in the welcome sound; and, with an energy I had felt myself incapable of a minute before, I started off towards the spot from whence the sounds proceeded, calling at intervals with all my strength, and listening as the barking of the dog became more and more distinct. At length I could perceive the light shine dimly through the drifting snow, from a cottage window, which, having reached, I entered, almost exhausted. I was kindly received by the humane inmates, to whom I told my piteous tale. The storm still howled without. The good woman made for me a shake-down upon the floor, close by the fire, whereon to pass the night. After my benumbed limbs were restored to animation, the good man of the house took the book, and, after the worship, in which I joined with a fervour I had never felt before, we all retired to rest, the family speaking all the comfort to me their feeling hearts could dictate, and promising to rise before dawn, to assist in searching for my pack. All was still within; but the storm raged with unabated violence without, and for hours sleep forsook my pillow. I was tormented with heat; pains shot through my frame, and before the dawn I was in a raging fever, and unable to rise. The good people of the house were sore distressed. I gave them the best information I could where to search for my pack; but it was very vague, for I knew not myself the spot where it had bounded from me, and I was at this time two long Scotch miles from the Soutra Hill, and one mile off the highway. The storm of the preceding evening had been followed by a partial thaw after daybreak; but all, save where the wind had blown the snow from the heights, lay a trackless waste. Far on in the day the searchers returned from their fruit-

less labours, fatigued and hungry. I was myself much worse; no doctor was to be had nearer than Haddington, neither was there accommodation for me in the house. Ill as I was, I had no choice. A horse and cart were, at my request, procured, and, carefully wrapped up, I was conveyed to Haddington. What followed for some days I know not. I will hurry on. I would not have been so minute, were it not to show you that there are shipwrecks and disasters on land as well as at sea.

"When I recovered my consciousness, I found myself in an obscure garret, the dwelling of a lone and pious widow, who had taken into her house the sick stranger, when all else had refused. I had occupied her only bed, while she passed her nights, seated by her scanty fire, and nursed me in my delirium and fever. The good doctor had attended me as assiduously as if I had been his own son, and aided the widow in supporting me. The snow had been all off the ground for many days; and whoever had found my store had kept it concealed, for I never heard of it. I was once again penniless, and worse than I was at the commencement; for I was indebted to my kind landlady and the doctor. My two guineas and seven shillings were still in my pocket untouched; for the pious widow had, even in her straits, on my account held them sacred, and they knew from the people who brought me of my ruinous misfortune. When I became able to move about, I besought them to accept of even one of the guineas as a remuneration; but their answer was, they would give me credit until I was enabled to pay them in full—and, thank God, I have done this long ago.

"It was well up in February before I could resume my toils. Disheartening as my misfortune had been, my ultimate object, and the means of attaining it, I had never for one moment allowed to pass from my mind. It was now that the reward of honesty and fair dealing was felt by me,

and proved of immense advantage in enabling me to recover my loss. There was not a merchant with whom I had ever dealed, who did not offer me his goods in trust, to what amount I chose; but to avoid debt has ever been my maxim, and I took no more than my finances would allow. I had only a smaller assortment, and returned the sooner. I was astonished at the rapidity of my own sales—for all had heard of my misfortunes, and pitied me; and, if I was expected, no other packman had any chance. What was required, if not in my pack, I got orders for, and brought at the appointed time. From that day to this, everything has prospered with me. I have attained my second step, and am now on my way to London, and other towns, to purchase goods, and a horse and cart. To cover my expenses, I am doing a little business by the way. An extensive shop, and at length a competency, are, I trust, not far distant."

By mid-day, the gale of wind had considerably abated; the tide being in the evening, the vessels could not depart. We sat chatting together. The perseverance and success of my companion had made a deep impression on me. I began to think that I might do worse than follow his example; for I had never left my country through choice.

"Wilson," said I, "do you think I could be converted into a packman? I care not what I do for an honest livelihood. I have often heard that an old packman makes a good merchant—I am willing to try if an old merchant can make a good packman. I have a few guineas to purchase goods with. If you will tell me what are the proper kinds, we will go together, by sea, to London, where you are going, and make our purchases: are you agreed?"

"No! Square, no! I will never agree to trust myself upon the fickle element, when there is no occasion for it, besides manifest loss. With what goods are in my pack, I will travel free to London, and put a pound in my pocket,

at least. If you have any thought of turning to my profession, you must study economy and a placid temper—'take the bit and the buffet with it.' I have not a doubt you may succeed, if you stick to it in earnest; and I have no objection to give you all the information I can, before we part."

I myself had, indeed, no other motive for going by sea to London, than to avoid the fatigue and get quickly there; so it was agreed that I should proceed with him, and learn from his experience. My sailor's dress was sold, and one similar to his own purchased; and, while this was being done, he told me that he had upon his person, carefully concealed, an order from the Royal Bank of Scotland, upon the Bank of England, for one hundred and sixty guineas, which he had doubly secured. It was, he said, not indorsed, nor would he indorse it, until he was obtaining the cash. "There are such things as robberies," he said, "and much worse. I have left a letter and instructions at the bank, and with Widow Craig, who nursed me in my sickness (we have been as mother and son since then), that, if my order is not called for within twelve months, she is to give my letter to the worthy doctor, who will receive the amount, and administer to the widow's comforts. What remains at her death, I cheerfully bequeath to him. You may smile at this; but our trade is one not without danger even in Scotland; and in England, where highwaymen and footpads are plenty, we travel with our lives in our hands."

Before the evening closed, I was all ready to start upon my new line of life. As Berwick, he said, was not a proper place to lay in a store of goods to sell again with a sufficient profit, I purchased only a few pounds' worth of hardware, Wilson being so kind as sell me, at cost, one dozen of Barcelona silk handkerchiefs, of which he had a great supply, and which he esteemed as valuable and light of carri-

age. The remainder of my cash he made me take out of my purse, saying that none but those who knew not the value of money carried it in purses. It was as if the owner had collected it for the first who chose to put his hand in his pocket, or for a vain display.

"Square," said he, "if you had a thousand guineas in your pocket, among strangers never show or say you have a coin in gold. Tempt no man to evil. The poor travel safe, when the rich are in peril. Allow me to place your guineas in the bank."

He then opened the lining of the waistband of my small-clothes, and stitched them in so dexterously, that no one could have thought there was coin there.

"Now," says he, "we are all ready to start for London on the morning. The way is long, and our burdens heavy; but they will get lighter as we move along. Our lodging for to-morrow night is Belford. I shall manage so that we shall reach it before dark. The direct distance is only fifteen miles; but we may travel thirty in quest of customers. You are not now, as you were a few months since, to expect that customers will come to you—the pack is a travelling counter, and must move about."

Next morning, after an early breakfast, we crossed the Tweed, and walked on, with our packs slung over our shoulders—the weather cool and pleasing. I felt a buoyancy of spirits I had not experienced for some time; I dreamed waking dreams, and built castles in the air. Wilson sung snatches of songs. I had once more entered on a new walk in life, and begun at the right end, as Wilson said in one of his sage remarks.

"Square, your last misfortune arose from this—you began business at the wrong end; you commenced too soon and too full. No man can manage money well who knows not, by earning, the value of it. Be prudent—be cunning, too, if you please; but use not your cunning to wrong any one

—a shilling won by fraud is a pound of loss. I have known many since I began who have hastened to be rich in that way; but they have all failed in their attempts. Those who once dealt would never deal with them again; their means of success became every journey more circumscribed. Here is a farm-steading—we must try how we are to succeed on the south of the Tweed."

I will not weary you with our hawking adventures. We progressed on our journey with various success, but constantly with gain, our packs lightening apace; I liking the profession very ill. I loved not money sufficiently to bend my mind to the slights and insults we were often forced to endure. Upon Wilson they had no effect in ruffling his temper. He would smile, and, with a slyness of humour, turn their bitterest taunts against the taunters, or banter them into good-humour, and effect a sale. He would, indeed, be as good-humoured under insult as if he had been civilly treated; while I was on the eve of bursting into a rage, and either looking sulky or returning taunt for taunt. Indeed, before we reached Northallerton, I had made up my mind to relinquish my new calling as soon as we got to London; and told Wilson so. He shook his head.

"John Square, you are one of those who, for want of firmness, never get on in the world. When there is an object to gain, we must not be scared from it by trifles, or neglect an honest mean that leads to success. You have commenced at the hardest part of a packman's life—his journey in England. But, ho! here is Northallerton. To-morrow we will strike off the eastern road, and go to York. I expect to see some acquaintances there."

Thus we journeyed on, I more through a dogged stubbornness not to yield, than any love I had for the mode of life I had chosen, until we were a few miles from York, where we overtook a brother of the trade. As soon as he came in sight, Wilson said—

"There is Simon Hepburn, the Praying Packman, as the profane call him, or Pious Simon, his more befitting name; for he really is a good, well-meaning man. I have known him for some years, neither richer nor poorer; his pack or cash seldom exceeds twenty pounds, yet he could easily increase his store, if he had ambition; but that he wants; and his gains are always spent upon objects of charity or piety. He is never without Bibles or pious books, which he bestows, in free gift, where he thinks they may be of use; he has only particular houses where he stops, and he is always a welcome guest, superseding the goodman of the house, for the time, in the Christian office of a teacher. The most pleasing and edifying evenings I have ever spent were with him. When he is in Haddington, Widow Craig's is his home; and, although we are two of a trade, happy am I when we meet. You shall judge for yourself. His history is a most singular one, and nothing gives him more pleasure than to relate it. Let him speak for himself."

We quickened our pace, and soon overtook him. He was a man, to all appearance, above sixty years of age; his hair was white as snow, with a shade of care at times upon his regular features, that flitted off, and was succeeded by a gleam of internal satisfaction. The smoothness of his brow, and the fulness of his features, bore an unusual contrast to the whiteness of his locks, the appearance of age and youth being strangely combined, while his whole appearance was winning in the extreme. When we came up to him, Bill said—

"Simon, I am happy to have met you; how come you on?"

"Far beyond my deserts," said he. "How are you? and how did you leave my worthy friend the widow?"

"In good health," said Bill; "I thank you. I have been just talking of you to my friend Square here, who would feel obliged were you to give him an outline of your strange history, as we walk on to York."

"Certainly, Bill, certainly; it may be of use to him. He is a new beginner in his present craft, as I was when the events happened that I am going to relate.

"The changes that occur both in nations and families," said Simon, "are soon felt by the individuals. Lawsuits and bad management had reduced the once extensive patrimony of our family to a small farm. At my grandfather's death, my father, who had married, as his father thought, far beneath him, had three sons. My oldest brother, before he succeeded, went to Holland, having got a commission in the Scottish brigade; the second attended the farm, at which I assisted until I was about eighteen. I grew weary of farming, and resolved to become a merchant. I was induced to this by the success of several who had left our neighbourhood, done well after a few years' travel as packmen, and were then settled in various towns, and prosperous. It was in the beginning of May, as soon as the weather became settled, that I left the neighbourhood of Annan, with a few pounds, on my way to Dumfries, and thence to Edinburgh; my object being to furnish my pack. I had a relation of my mother's, a wholesale merchant, in the first town, who had promised to do all in his power for me, as far as advice and a few articles would go. Cheerful and full of hope, I strode along, till, within about two miles from Dumfries, I overtook a young and interesting female, accompanied by a young man. We entered into conversation as we walked along. She appeared sad, and often sighed; while he was taciturn, and appeared to avoid conversation. When within a few hundred yards of the town, they stopped behind for a minute or so, and then, the man leaving her, she overtook me, and we entered the town together. I learned from her that she was on her way to Edinburgh, and, having a brother married in Dumfries, she was going to his house for some articles belonging to her, and her fellow-traveller was to meet her there.

"Anxious to commence my new mode of life, I had soon completed my business with my friend. He was standing at the door when I came up with the young woman, and, laughing, inquired if she was my sweetheart or wife. In the course of two or three hours, I was again upon the road towards Moffat, on my way to Edinburgh, with my light pack upon my back, as happy as a king. As I passed the side of a young plantation that skirted the road, a few miles from Dumfries, I saw, lying on the side of the way, a small bundle, tied in a silk handkerchief. I immediately picked it up; and, after standing a few minutes, and looking around to see if any one was in sight who might have dropped it, I called aloud, but there was no answer. I continued my pace, rejoicing in my good fortune. At about a quarter-of-a-mile from the spot, there was a public-house, into which I entered, for a little refreshment, and to inquire if they would purchase anything I could supply them. I placed the bundle I had picked up and my pack upon the table, got what I asked for, and then inquired if they would purchase. During my stay, two farm-servants came in; and, when I was about to depart, they, seeing me lift the bundle from the table, inquired if it was my own. I hesitated for a moment, and, unfortunately, said that it was. They looked at each other; no more passed, and I resumed my journey towards Moffat, which I was anxious to reach before nightfall. I accomplished it; and, stopping at a cheap lodging-house, had an early supper, and went soon to bed, weary with my day's walk.

"Scarce had I fallen asleep, when I was aroused by a loud knocking at the door, and the sound of many voices. Before I was fully awake, I was seized in my bed, and my hands bound tightly together. My terror became extreme —I shook in every limb. In vain I strove to speak, and inquire what all this meant. I could only see that every eye was bent on me with an expression of horror and rage.

My clothes were searched, and then forced upon me. I was not allowed to assist myself—my hands were unbound to get on my coat; but a man held each arm while another pulled. They seemed afraid I would do something desperate, and were as coarse and cautious as if I had been a ferocious animal; yet I was passive from excess of fear; and, although numbers were speaking, I was in such a state that I could not collect the purport of their conversation. Execrations sounded in my ears above the confusion of voices, and the first sentence I made out was spoken by my landlady:—'Oh, the bloody-minded young wretch!' she cried. 'Who would have thought it, to look at him? But I hope they will hang him as high as Haman. And, after all, to come into a lone widow's house to bring disgrace on it. Take him away, sirs, as quick as you can, or I shall be an undone woman, and my character entirely lost.'

"Astonished at what the woman said, I inquired what offence I had committed—or where. O God! what was my horror to learn that I was charged with murder!—that the bundle in my possession had been the property of the victim of some ruthless villain—and that I was taken for him! In vain I protested my innocence. The two men were present to whom I had said, when they inquired, that the bundle was my own. I was thus, by my own confession—if not a murderer—a convicted liar. No one, for a moment, thought me innocent. So strong was their conviction of my guilt, that had the laws not deterred them, they would have rejoiced to have put me to death on the spot. Even this would have been kindness, in a worldly sense, to what I was doomed to suffer.

"It was nearly eleven o'clock at night, but clear and bright; the moon was nearly full; the air a little sharp, but not cold, when I was placed, bound hand and foot, in a cart, and accompanied by the two men and two officers. I thought my heart would have burst. I opened not my

mouth to speak in answer to their questions, cruel taunts, and upbraidings. I saw I was an object of horror and loathing to them—and deservedly so, had I been the guilty creature they had cause to think me. I passed the melancholy time we were upon the road in tears, and prayers that my innocence might be made manifest; but I knew not yet the extent of my misery. At length the cart stopped at the door of the public-house; my feet were loosened, and I was desired to come down, and enter the same room where I had been in the afternoon. A crowd of horrorstricken people were huddled round the fireplace. In the wooden bed lay an object, covered with a white sheet, resembling a human body. I had never seen a corpse laid out in my life; yet the idea rushed upon my mind that this was one; and my blood curdled in my veins, as the conviction came over me that it was one that had met its fate by violence. I trembled, while the large drops of sweat stood upon my brow. All eyes were turned to me; a grim smile of malicious satisfaction was on the faces of some, while horror and pity were equally strongly marked upon the countenances of others. My natural feelings were, to all present, a sure indication of my guilt. I would have sunk to the ground had not the two men supported me. My head fell upon my breast. I requested a little water, in a voice scarcely audible. It was given me, and the sickness went off. One of the officers then, taking a lamp, went to the bed, and removed the sheet from the body. My eyes involuntarily followed him; a cry of horror escaped my lips; and I felt my muscles become rigid. Before me lay the body of the female I had parted with in health early in the forenoon, at the shop-door of my relation, shockingly mangled, her long fair hair clotted with blood, and her mild blue eyes, that had smiled upon me, dulled by the shade of death. I could only groan. My sufferings at this sight were beyond utterance. All in the room moved to the bed, and placed their hands upon the

bosom of the dead, and protested their innocence. I was ordered to do the same; but I could not summon resolution to touch the body. My whole nature revolted from the contact.

"'I am innocent!' I cried; 'God knows I am innocent! I know nothing of this foul murder. Ask me to cut off my hand, or place it in the burning fire, among the live coals; but ask me not to touch that bloody body, for pity's sake!'

"My appeals were vain; they only served to confirm the prepossessions of my hearers that I was guilty. As I stood, shrinking from the fearful object as far as those who held me would permit, a cry arose that I was the murderer beyond a doubt, and that I should be compelled to touch the body. One of the officers seized my hand; those who held me pushed me towards the bed; I struggled in vain; my hand was held fast as I was forced along; and the consequence was, that it came with force upon the chest of the murdered victim, when a gurgling sound issued from the gaping wound. I became insensible.

"When my faculties returned, it was the grey of the morning. We were entering the town of Dumfries; I in the cart, and the murdered body by my side. I was lodged in the jail—a criminal already condemned in the eyes of my fellow-men. Even the felons and debtors in prison avoided my society. At my examination before the sheriff, I trembled at the array of circumstantial evidence that was brought against me. My own relation admitted that he had seen us together at his shop-door. The young woman had gone from thence to her brother's, and staid only a short time—telling them she was on her way to Edinburgh, and was to meet a young man, who was to accompany her there. She had been seen by the two men lingering upon the Moffat road, near the planting, a short time before, with the same bundle in her hand that I had said was mine when

they saw me in the public-house with it in my possession. They had thought it strange, but paid no attention until the body of the young woman was discovered in the wood a few hours after, and still warm. I had been pursued, and the property proved to belong to the victim of my cruelty. My terror at being apprehended, and my refusal to touch the dead body, all militated against me. I was fully committed as the murderer, without hope of escape, innocent as I was of the crime. To this damning evidence, all I had to advance was my unheeded assertion of my innocence.

"From the beginning of May until the month of September I lay in jail—a stranger to comfort of any kind. Every anguish was mine, except remorse. I was looked upon by all, except my parents, as the most hardened villain on earth. No one doubted my guilt, except my parents; and it was only their parental feelings that made them doubt and pray that, if innocent, the really guilty might be discovered. I will not attempt to describe the scenes between me and my parents. They both wished that the grave might hide their shame before the fatal day of the execution of their son; for all chance of proving my innocence seemed out of the question. The worthy minister that visited the jail firmly believed in my guilt; to all my solemn asseverations of innocence, he only replied by holding forth on the dangers of hardened crime, with earnest exhortations for me to confess and make atonement as far as was in my power. He would for hours lay before me the horrors of appearing before my Maker with a lie in my mouth. My pride was wounded by the good man's well-meant efforts. I began to avoid him as much as possible; and, when I could not, I was silent and sullen. This, also, was held to be a sure token of my guilt. Alas! I was not hardened; but I was heart-broken. My Bible was my only companion—my soother and support; for I found no threat there but against

the wicked. Its Author was the searcher of hearts. In it I found I was really guilty of many crimes which my fellow-men thought nothing of; but there I also found a Saviour and Mediator. My mind became humbled and composed; and, while I still solemnly asserted my innocence of the murder, I did it with temper and meekness.

"'Worthy sir,' I said to the clergyman, 'appearances have deceived you. If it is the will of God that the innocent should suffer, for some wise purpose, his will be done. If it is not so, my guiltlessness of blood will be made evident in this world—at least I shall be declared innocent on that great day when all shall render their account—in this matter, innocent, save of the guilty falsehood I stated, that the unfortunate female's bundle was my own. Alas! I wished not to keep the property from the rightful owner. My thought at the time was, that, if I owned that I had found it, they would take it from me, or make a disturbance about it. Had they only said a few words more, I had told the truth; and thus, probably, have contributed to the proof of my innocence.'

"At length, the Lords of Justiciary entered the town. None but those who are within the walls of a jail, awaiting their arrival, can conceive the dread sensation of fear and hope awakened in the breasts of criminals by the clang of the trumpets and shouting of the mob, as the pageant proceeds through the streets. How bitter are the feelings produced by the joyous shouts of the thoughtless people! forgetful, or heedless, of the fates of their fellow-mortals. Next day I was led into the court, more dead than alive. My head became giddy. Everything before me—the crowded court, the judges, jury, and officers—became a confused mass; a murmur as if of horror sounded in my ears from the assembled multitude; the fatal bundle lay upon the table before me. At length all was ready; and, the indictment having been read aloud by the clerk, the judge, in a solemn

voice, asked if I was guilty or not. After a gasp or two for breath—

"'O my lord!' I said, 'I am as guiltless of this crime as the unborn babe. Have mercy on me!' And I sank upon the table before me, overpowered.

"The public prosecutor then opened the case, and harrowed up my soul with the fearful account of the diabolical deed. He almost persuaded me I was the murderer; so clearly did he reason from appearances. The witnesses were called; a chain of circumstantial evidence was made out; all that was awanting in it was, that I had not been seen to do the deed. Witnesses I had not one. Those whom I could have called could have said nothing but what they had already said, and it was wrested to my disadvantage by my own story; for I was a self-convicted liar, and little better than a thief, in my attempt to appropriate what was not my own—even in the most favourable construction my able counsel could put upon my case. The jury, without leaving their box, pronounced me guilty, without a dissentient voice. The judge put on the fearful black hat upon his head; and, after a heart-harrowing speech upon my guilt, pronounced sentence of death upon me. I was to be taken back to the jail, and from thence to the spot where the murder had been committed, and hung in chains on the second market-day in October. How I was removed from the court I cannot tell; neither can I tell what intervened for some hours. The last thing strongly impressed upon my memory is a burst of satisfaction in the court, when the sentence was passed upon me, and the hooting of the crowd without; yet, strange to say, I slept soundly after the irons were riveted upon my ankles, and awoke to find my doom fixed, and my days on earth numbered. I became, in a manner, resigned to my fate. Indeed, save for my parents, I had no other regret in leaving the world; yet, at times, an anxious wish would steal upon my mind that I might be saved from my unme-

rited death. It was the shuddering of nature at entering upon eternity. The hope never left me that my innocence would, at one time or another, sooner or later, be made manifest to my fellow-men—for murder will not hide, nor innocent blood cry from the earth in vain. The hours flew past with fearful rapidity; the neighbouring clock seemed never to cease to strike the hour. Night followed day, and day night, as if there was no interval between; yet there was a heaviness upon me that bowed me down. My last Sabbath on earth arrived; the day was spent in devotion—my heart-broken parents, who now were convinced of my innocence, pouring out their souls with mine to the Throne of Grace. If ever there was on earth a foretaste of the joys of heaven, I felt it that day in the condemned cell, loaded with irons. We had taken farewell of each other, in the full assurance of soon meeting where there is no sorrow or shame. The bitterness of death was past. My thoughts were no longer of this world.

"The Monday passed on. There was but one whole day more for me on the earth. Wednesday was to be my last. On the morning of Tuesday, as soon as the jail was opened, my brother, who had always thought hardly of me, and visited me only twice, rushed into my cell, and, weeping, fell upon my bosom. After a few minutes, he sobbed—

"'My brother! Simon, my brother! can you forgive me for thinking so hardly of you?'

"'My brother,' I replied, 'I have ever thought of you in grief and pity, never in anger. My heart blesses you for this kindness.'

"'You are innocent, my own Simon! You are cleared of this crime. All is made manifest. The worthy minister is at present with the provost, who will write to the sheriff to delay the fatal day, until your pardon come.'

"I heard no more: a faintness came over me; my heart ceased to beat, and all consciousness left me for some time.

When I recovered, we fell upon our knees, and poured out our souls in thanksgivings. At that time I dedicated the whole remainder of my days to the service of that merciful God who had made clear my innocence, and spared my parents and friends from shame.

"When we had become composed, I learned from him the wonderful manner in which my innocence had been discovered, and the guilty punished by the hand of the sufferer's own brother. She had resided in the parish of Caerlaverock, with a brother, a widower, as his housekeeper, for some years; and it had been understood that she was soon to marry a young man, a stranger, who had come some years before into the parish. He was on intimate terms with her brother; but her other friends did not approve of the connection, as his character was none of the best. Her brother was of a thoughtless, jovial disposition, and saw no harm in him, for he was an excellent boon-companion, and they were thus inseparable on all occasions of festivity. On the Saturday afternoon before the day appointed for my execution, they had gone out with their guns to shoot for amusement. Both had been drinking pretty hard; and it was observed that the stranger had for some time almost entirely given himself up to intoxication, especially since the death of Grace, his sweetheart. This was attributed to his grief, and begat pity for him, and no one was more assiduous in endeavouring to cheer his gloom than her brother. After their search for game, they were returning to the village, when, by some accident, the gun which Grace's brother carried went off, and lodged its contents in the body of his companion, who fell, dreadfully wounded. A surgeon was sent for, who gave little hopes of his recovery. No blame could be attached to his companion, as the accident was seen by several, and the grief of Grace's brother was excessive. On the Sabbath, the stranger was much worse. His mind seemed to suffer more than his body; and

words of fearful import escaped from him at intervals, which harrowed up the souls of those who attended him. Cries of despair, mixed with horrid imprecations, burst from his lips. Yet death evidently was approaching fast to seize his victim. When they spoke of sending for the minister to pray with and console him, he blasphemed, and thus spent he his last Sabbath on earth. Through the night he fell into a troubled sleep, and began to mutter. Gradually his words became more distinct. He talked of Grace, and recounted her murder as he had perpetrated it; writhed in remorse, and called for mercy from my injured spirit, as if I had already suffered. As soon as the morning dawned, the minister was sent for, and what the guilty man had said in his sleep recounted to him. He was now very low; the hand of death was on him; and, for some time, he was deaf to the remonstrances of the divine. But at length he confessed all; told that they would find the knife with which he had done the fearful crime buried at the back of the cottage where he lay. All was written down by the minister. The knife was found, stained with the blood of his victim. I was now as much the object of pity as I had been of hatred and horror. That day my irons were struck off; I had the freedom of the jail until my pardon arrived, and was visited by numbers of the inhabitants, who loaded me with presents. But my feelings of gratitude were principally awakened on my parents' account, for the joy it imparted to them. Many, many years have passed since that event, but it is ever present with me, and spurs me on in my labours of love, in comforting and winning souls to God."

So deeply had I been interested in the narrative of the Pious Pedlar, that we had reached York, and stood at the door of the Duke of Marlborough public-house, before I was aware of the distance we had walked after he commenced. As this was the house where Bill and a number of others in his line were in the habit of staying during the

time they were in the town, we entered, and found two or three, who, like ourselves, had come to purchase goods. I was astonished at the haughty manner in which they returned our salutation. The landlord, who seemed to know all his guests well, received William and Simon with a hearty welcome; and, shaking me by the hand, wished me success in my new calling, expressing his hope that I would find everything in the Marlborough to my liking. We were then ushered into a small room, where dinner was to be served to us. When we were comfortably seated, I remarked to Bill the impression the lofty bearing of the others had made upon me, and inquired if he knew the cause. He laughed—

"Quite well," said he; "there is an aristocracy among pedlars as well as other callings. They belong to the waggoners, and would think it a degradation to associate with us bearers. We are a grade beneath them; besides, the waggoners are, for the most part, gentlemen by birth—the younger cadets of decayed houses of long standing. With a little capital to commence with, they never dealt in small quantities, their line lying in supplying the retailers in distant towns, and many of them are very wealthy. Upon my return from London, when I have purchased my horse and waggon, I will be entitled to rank with them, but will never be treated as the equal of those who have both birth and waggons; nevertheless, I will be a waggoner until I commence business in my own shop, when I will be a grade higher than even waggoner; and, with economy and my usual perseverance, I may be a bailie, or even provost, of the town I settle in. Only think of that, John Square! Stick to your present occupation, and, without trusting the stormy ocean, you may, by following my counsel, succeed as well as I or any one."

"My young friend," said the pious Simon, "all these are good in subjection; but a higher aim ought to be

your guide through life; for all these give not peace to the soul."

While he spoke, we were joined by other two of our own rank, to whom my two companions were barely civil, and very distant. Both were well advanced in years, with a forward cast of countenance and a look of low cunning strangely blended, which they endeavoured to make pass for frankness. Having settled our small bill, and left our packs in charge of the landlord, I walked out to see the minster, they to transact some business of their own.

I returned when the shades of evening fell, and found that Wilson and Simon had arrived some time before me, and were seated by themselves. There were several others in the room in general conversation, in which we took no part. The two whom I had left before I went out were still in the same position, evidently under the influence of liquor. They were clearly unwelcome; their conversation was only calculated to beget disgust in well-regulated minds, consisting of anecdotes of fraud and imposition, of which they seemed proud of being the heroes.

"These two," said Simon to me, "are a specimen of those who bring disrepute upon any callings, and much more so on ours. They are not without talents, but they cultivate them to unprofitable ends. I have known them for many years; and, with all their boasted cunning, they are, I believe, poorer at this moment than they were when I first knew them, and must still become poorer, for their character is gone. The public fear to deal with them, and will not do it, even when they would act honestly. They are forced to range far, to places where they are unknown; and even there they are every year circumscribing and planting thorns for others to walk over. They, besides, are ever under the fear of injury from some one or other whom they have defrauded. Such are the fruits of dishonest dealing."

All our business being transacted, it was agreed that we

should continue our route for London, to purchase silks and light goods, and return by the same route to Scotland. William having purchased a small waggon and horse, together with a small assortment of woollens, my stock remained much the same, and was slung over my shoulder, save when, for ease, and there were no houses on the road, I placed it in the waggon; for I was weary of my pedlar's life, and only endured it until I should reach London. We arrived at Hatfield, about twenty-five miles from London, early in the afternoon, and resolved to stay for the night, as Wilson had hopes of doing some good in the neighbourhood. As for me, I had ceased, much to his chagrin, to attempt any sales, as my pack was now much reduced. While he was gone, I sat at the inn-door, amusing myself in the best manner I could—sometimes musing on my strange fate, at others gazing listlessly upon the passers-by—when a post-chaise drove up to the door at a furious rate. The horses were extremely blown, and covered with perspiration. A gentleman and lady descended from the chaise; she evidently was under restraint, and looked anxiously and fearfully around. Our eyes met; I thought she gave her hand that was disengaged a movement, as if she wished me to come to her. She was in tears. I rose, and moved to approach, but she was hurried into the house before I could advance; for I was in doubt—yet her look expressed what her hand signalled. I thought it strange, for a moment; but this feeling died away, for I might have been deceived. The gentleman came to the door, to hurry the people, as they were rather slow, as he thought, in procuring fresh horses. I good-naturedly went to assist the postilion. As I stood before the chaise, I looked up to one of the windows, and saw the female weeping at it. Our eyes again met; she clasped her hands imploringly, and, taking a small packet, placed it behind the window-shutter, and, raising her clasped hands to heaven, looked earnestly at me. I gave a nod of

assent. She retired from the window. All this had passed quickly as a shadow. In a few minutes they were again in the chaise. As it passed off, I again gave a nod, and a languid smile passed over her face. I entered the house, and inquired of the landlord who they were; but got no information, as he said they were unknown to him. I requested to have a glass of brandy-and-water in the room where the lady had been. As soon as it was brought, and he had retired, I looked behind the window-shutter, and, taking out the parcel, found it to contain a sum of money and a sealed letter, upon the inside of the wrapper of which was written in pencil—"Benevolent stranger, whoever you are, for mercy's sake and all that is dear to you, deliver this as directed, with your utmost despatch, and snatch a fellow-creature from misery. Let this supply your immediate wants, and an ample reward shall follow. Use all despatch, I again implore you."

I was for a few minutes lost in amazement. The letter was addressed to Captain James H——, Strand, London. Could this be my old patron and captain? There was not one moment to lose. I descended to the bar, and told the landlord I must set off for London immediately, and requested his advice how I was to proceed. He told me I must make the journey on horseback, as he had not another pair of horses. I told him that was impossible, as I had never been on horseback in my life, and I could walk it faster and with more ease than I could ride. I would walk on to Barnet before dark, and get a chaise there if I could find none sooner. As I was on the eve of setting off, he found means to procure an old phaeton; and, while it was getting ready, I wrote to Wilson that circumstances forced me to London, but that I would perhaps see him in the morning. At all events, I made him heartily welcome to my pack, as I meant to carry it no more, wishing him health and prosperity if we should not meet.

I mounted the high-hung, crazy vehicle, with a lad to drive and bring it back, having satisfied mine host to his utmost wish. By half-past ten o'clock, I reached the jeweller's in the Strand, whose first floor Captain H—— occupied, and found him at home. His lady was also present. His surprise was great at my entering. Our joy was mutual, and only damped by my relating the strange manner in which I had again had the pleasure of seeing him. He broke the letter open, and having hastily perused it, turned to his wife, who sat pale and anxiously looking at him—"My love, I must be off this instant, and endeavour to rescue Catherine from her unpleasant thraldom. Do not be alarmed—there is no danger. During the time I am getting all ready, you may peruse the letter." Saying this, he rung the bell, and ordered his servant to procure a post-chaise as quickly as he could, and send in refreshments for me. Mrs H—— was dissolved in tears, as she had read the letter to an end. When we were again alone, "James," said she, "this proceeding of Master Wilton is very cruel to my cousin; although he is her guardian, he has, I should think, no right to wound her feelings, and hurry her about the country in this mysterious manner. I am fearful he has some reason he is ashamed to confess. My dear James, be careful of yourself for my sake; I shall be miserable until your return."

"There is not the smallest occasion, my love; I shall write you as soon as I arrive at Mr Wilton's. In the morning, you must write a note to Mr Stenton, to call upon you. Show him your cousin's letter, and order him to take what steps he may judge necessary in this affair."

"Can it be possible," said she, "that my aunt approves of this proceeding? He could not have removed Catherine without her consent."

"I shall soon know, my love. The dear girl must not be allowed to suffer from their designs or caprice."

At this moment the chaise was announced to be at the door, and in a short time we were in it, and rattling along towards Barnet, where we changed horses, and were in Hatfield a little after daybreak. During our dark and comfortless ride, I told him all that had befallen me since we parted in Lisbon. He had only been in London a few months, where he had come upon business—an uncle of his wife's having died some time before, leaving the bulk of his fortune to his two neices—Catherine, the young lady whose letter I had brought to London, and his wife. To Catherine, his favourite sister's daughter, he had left, besides an equal sum in cash, all his landed and other property. Mr Wilton's sister, the aunt of both, was a rich widow, but of a morose and finical temper. Catherine had been brought up by her some fifty miles from London, and Mr H—— had no idea until my arrival that she had not been still with her. "I hope there is no foolish love affair in this strange business," said he; "for Catherine is a warm-hearted, susceptible girl. Her father was our countryman, and my intimate friend."

As Mr Wilton's property lay near Baldock, about eighteen miles distant, and no post-horses were to be got, the captain, on horseback, set off alone; I was to follow on foot, which I preferred, to Stevenage, where I was to wait until I heard from him. After a hasty parting from my fellow-traveller Wilson, which was not without regret on both sides, I set off for Stevenage; he saying, as he shook my hand—

"John Square, I hope you will never want, but you will never be rich. You are as unstable as water."

I had only been in the inn at Stevenage a short time, when a servant arrived with a note, informing me that Captain H—— had got all arranged to his satisfaction, and would return to London on the following day, requesting me to hasten thither with a letter for Mrs H——; which I did, and took lodgings for myself in Lower Thames

Street. When the captain and I again met, I found present the young lady and another gentleman. I was most graciously received by all. The uncle of Catherine was likewise present, and, turning to his niece, said—

"So this is the messenger you contrived to engage, strictly as I watched you in this foolish affair. I see that a woman's invention, like her love, has no bounds"—saying which, he good-humouredly patted the happy and blushing Catherine under the chin.

The captain retired with me to a separate room, where he told me that the whole had arisen out of the anger of his wife's aunt, who had set her heart upon marrying her niece to a young clergyman of her neighbourhood, for whom she had not the smallest regard, and whose assiduities were hateful to her, as her heart was already engaged to Mr Stenton, a distant relation of her own; but, as his circumstances were not sufficiently prosperous to enable them to marry, she had concealed their love from all but Mrs H——.

"The death of her uncle, and my arrival in London, altered her views. She rebelled against her aunt's authority, and refused to see the clergyman as a lover. This threw the old lady into a paroxysm of rage. Poor Catherine was locked up, and, all her repositories being searched, Mr Stenton's letters were found. They were immediately sealed up, and a letter written to Mr Wilton, her brother, of the most alarming kind for the safety of his now wealthy niece, representing that she meant to throw herself and fortune away upon some peasant in the neighbourhood. He had posted, on receipt of the packet, to his sister, when his fears were further excited by the old lady's conjectures. Catherine was unconscious of what had passed, until she was summoned to the presence of her uncle, whom she had seldom before seen. He is a good-hearted, but a positive, irascible man. No explanation was asked. When all ap-

peared so plain against the trembling girl, she was, by her uncle and aunt, hurried into a post-chaise, and was on her way to Mr Wilton's. She had contrived to write to me during the short time she was allowed to prepare for the journey, but had no opportunity until, struck by your manners, she resolved to shorten her confinement by trusting you, as her uncle's anger was so great that he had scarce spoken to her since they entered the chaise, but to threaten and abuse her. When I arrived, an explanation and reconciliation had taken place, and the marriage will follow in a few weeks. It only remains for you to consider in what manner we can serve you."

I returned him my thanks for their kind intentions; and said the young lady's purse, which I would not affront them by offering to return, was much more than sufficient reward for all I had done; and, begging I might not detain him longer from his friends, I bade him adieu, promising to call in a day or two.

CHARLES LAWSON.

"TAK a faither's advice, Betty, my woman," said Andrew Weir to his only daughter—"tak a faither's advice, and avoid gaun blindfolded to your ruin. Ye are sune aneugh to marry these seven years yet. Marry! preserve us! for I dinna ken what the generation is turning to, but I'll declare bits o' lasses now-a-days haena the dolls weel oot o' their arms, till they tak a guidman by the hand. But aboon everything earthly, I wad impress it upon ye, bairn, that ye canna be owre carefu o' your company; mind that a character is a' a woman has to carry her through the warld, and ye should guard it like the apple o' your e'e; and remember, that folk are aye judged o' frae the company they keep. Now, how often maun I warn ye no to be seen wi' Charles Lawson? He's a clever lad, nae doubt—naebody denies that; but, oh, Betty, Betty, woman! wad ye only reflect that a' gifts are no graces; and I am far mistaen if he hasna a serpent's heart as weel as his tongue. He has naething o' the fear o' God before his een—ye canna deny that. In ae word, he is a wild, thoughtless ne'er-do-weel; and I charge ye—I command ye—Betty, that ye ne'er speak to him again in your born days; or, if ye do, ye surely will hae but little satisfaction to break your faither's heart, and bring him to the grave wi' sorrow and wi' shame—for that, Betty, that wad be the end o't."

Elizabeth heard him, and bent her head upon her bosom to conceal her confusion. The parental homily was too late—she was already the wife of Charles Lawson.

Having thus begun our story in the middle, it is neces-

sary that we go back, and inform the reader, in a few words, that Andrew Weir was a respectable farmer on the north side of the Tweed, and withal a decent and devout Presbyterian, and an elder in the kirk. Charles Lawson's parents were originally from Northumberland. They had known better days, and, at the period we have alluded to, were struggling with a hard farm in the neighbourhood of Andrew Weir's. Charles was not exactly what his father-in-law had described him; and, were we to express his portrait in a line, we should say, he had blue eyes and a broad brow, a goodly form and open heart. The ringlets which parted on Elizabeth's forehead were like the raven's wing, and loveliness, if not beauty, nestled around the dimples on her cheeks. Their affection for each other began in childhood, and grew with their years, till it became strong as their existence.

A few weeks after Andrew Weir had delivered the advice we have quoted to his daughter, Charles Lawson bade farewell to his parents, his wife, and his country, and proceeded to India, where a relative of his mother's had amassed a fortune, and who, while he refused to assist them in their distress, had promised to make provision for their son. As we are not writing a novel in three volumes, we shall not describe the scene of their parting, and tell with what agony, with what tears, and with what bitter words, Charles tore himself from his father, his mother, and his yet unacknowledged wife. The imagination of the reader may supply the blank. Hope urged him to go—necessity compelled him.

After his departure, Elizabeth drooped like an early lily beneath the influence of a returning frost. There were whisperings among the matrons and maidens of the neighbouring village. They who had formerly courted her society began to shun it; and even the rude clown, who lately stood abashed in her presence, approached her with

indecent familiarity. The fatal whisper first reached Andrew's ear at a meeting of the kirk-session, of which he was a member. He returned home troubled in spirit, a miserable and a humbled man, for his daughter had been his pride. Poor Elizabeth confessed that she was married, and attempted to prove what she affirmed. But this afforded no palliation of her offence in the eyes of her rigid and offended father.

"Oh, what hae I been born to suffer?" cried he, stamping his feet upon the ground. "O, you Witch o' Endor!—you Jezebel!—you disgrace o' kith and kin! Could naething—naething serve ye but breaking your puir auld faither's heart? Get out o' my sicht!—get out o' my sicht!"

He remained silent for a few moments—the parent arose in his heart—tears gathered in his eyes.

"But ye are still my bairn," he continued. "Oh, Betty, Betty, woman! what hae ye brocht us to?"

Again he was silent, and again proceeded—

"But I forgie ye, Betty! Yes, if naebody else will, your faither will forgie ye for your mother's sake, for ye are a' that I hae left o' her. But we canna haud up our heads again in this pairt o' the country—that's impossible. I've lang thocht o' gaun to America; and now I'm driven till't.'

He parted with his farm, and in the ensuing spring proceeded with his daughter to Canada. We shall not enter upon his fortunes in the New World—he was still broken in spirit; and, after twelve years' residence, he was neither richer nor happier than when he left Scotland. Elizabeth was now a mother, and the smiles of her young son seemed to shorten the years of her exile; yet, ever as she returned his smile, the thought of the husband of her youth flashed back on her remembrance, and anguish and misery shot through her bosom as the eagle darteth on its prey. Her heart was

not broken; but it fell like a proud citadel, burying the determined garrison.

Charles Lawson had not been in India many months, when a party of native troops attacking the property of his relative, Charles, who had fallen wounded amongst them, was carried by them in their retreat into the interior of the country, where, for several years, he was cut off from all intercourse or communication with his countrymen. On obtaining his liberty, he found that his kinsman had been for some time dead, and had left him his heir. His wife—his parents—doubt—anxiety—impatient affection—trembling hope—all hastened his return. At length the white cliffs of Albion appeared before him, like a fair cloud spread on the unruffled bosom of the ocean; and in a few days more the green hills of his childhood met his anxious eye.

It was the grey hour of a summer night as he again approached the roof that sheltered his childhood. His horse, as if conscious of supporting an almost unconscious rider, stopped involuntarily at the threshold. He trembled upon the saddle as a leaf that rustles in the wind. He raised his hand to knock at the door, but again withdrew it. The inmates of the house, aroused by the sound of a horse stopping at the door, came out to inquire the cause. Charles gazed upon them for a moment—it was a look of agony and disappointment—his heart gave one convulsive throb, and the icy sweat burst from his temples.

"Does not—does not Mr Lawson live here?" he inquired, almost gasping for words to convey the question.

"Mr Lawson! Na, na, sir," replied the senior of the group, "it's lang since he gaed awa. Ye ken he gaed a' wrang, puir man, and he's no lived here since the hard winter, for they didna come upon this parish."

"Did not come upon this parish!" exclaimed Charles; "heaven and earth! what do you mean?"

"Mean! what wad I mean," answered the other, "but just that they were removed to their ain parish! Is there ony disgrace in that?"

"Oh, my father!—my poor mother!" cried Charles, wildly.

"Mercy, sir!" rejoined the astonished farmer, "are ye Maister Charles? Bairns! haste ye, tak the horse to the stable. Losh, Charles, man, and how hae ye been? But ye dinna ken me, man; I'm your auld schulefellow, Bob Graham, and this is my wife, Mysie Allan—ye mind o' Mysie! Haste ye, Mysie lass, kill twa ducks, and the bairns and me will hool the peas. Really, Charles, man, I'm sae glad to see ye!"

During this harangue, Charles, led by his warmhearted friend, had entered the dwelling of his nativity; where Mr Graham again continued—

"Ye aiblins dinna ken that auld Andrew Weir was sae sair in the dorts when ye gaed awa, that he set aff wi' Betty for America. But I hear they are comin hame again this back end. The bairn will be a stout callant noo, and faith ye maun marry Betty, for she was a mensefu lass."

Charles could only reply by exclaiming—

"America!—my wife!—my child!"

Having ascertained where he would find his parents, early on the following morning he departed, and about five in the afternoon approached the village where he had been told they resided. When near the little burying-ground, he stopped to look upon the most melancholy funeral procession he had ever witnessed. The humble coffin was scarce coloured, and they who bore it seemed tired of their burden. Three or four aged and poor-looking people walked behind it. Scarce was it lowered into the grave, ere all departed save one, meanly clothed in widow's weeds, and bent rather with the load of grief than of years. She alone lingered, weeping over the hastily-covered grave.

"She seems poor," said Charles, "and if I cannot comfort her, I may at least relieve her necessities;" and, fastening his horse to the gate, he entered the churchyard.

She held an old handkerchief before her face, only removing it at intervals to steal a hurried glance at the new-made grave.

"Good woman," said Charles, as he approached her, "your sorrows demand my sympathy — could I assist you?"

"No! no!" replied the poor widow, without raising her face; "but I thank you for your kindness. Can the grave give up its dead?"

"But why should you remain here?" said he, with emotion; "tell me, could not I assist you?" And he placed a piece of money in her hand.

"No! no!" cried the widow, bitterly, and raising her head; "oh, that Mary Lawson should have lived to be offered charity on her husband's grave!"

"My mother! Gracious heaven, my mother!" exclaimed Charles, casting his arms around her neck.

Shall we describe the scene that followed? We will not —we cannot. He had seen his father laid in the dust, he had met his mother on his father's grave —— But we will not go on.

It was some weeks after this that he proceeded with his widowed mother to his native village, to wait the return of Elizabeth. Nor had he to wait; for, on the day previous to his return, Elizabeth, her son, and her father, had arrived. Charles and his parent had reached Mr Graham's— the honest farmer rushed to the door, and, hurrying both towards the house, exclaimed—

"Now, see if you can find onybody that ye ken here!"

His Elizabeth—his wife—his son—were there to meet him; the next moment she was upon his bosom, and her child clinging by her side, and gazing on his face. He

alternately held both to his heart—the mother and her son. Andrew Weir took his hand—his mother wept with joy, and blessed her children. Bob Graham and his Mysie were as happy as their guests. Charles Lawson bought the farm which Andrew Weir had formerly tenanted; and, our informant adds, they live on it still.

BON GAULTIER'S TALES.

MRS HUMPHREY GREENWOOD'S TEA-PARTY.

MRS HUMPHREY GREENWOOD was a stirring, lively, good-natured sort of person; had touched the meridian of her years; was mistress of a comfortable income; and possessed, withal, the privileged vivacity of a widow. Nobody gave nicer tea-parties than she; nobody managed to keep such a number of eligible bachelors on her visiting-list, and possessing, as she did, the nicest discrimination in drafting these in among the young ladies under her patronage, what wonder if no inconsiderable proportion of the matrimonial arrangements of her friends deduced their origin from these dangerously-seductive sofas in her snug little drawing-room?

It was in that snug little drawing-room that Mr Simon Silky first saw the future Mrs Simon; it was on one of those dangerously-seductive sofas that he found courage to put that question which procured him a better half, and a comfortable settlement for life for Miss Jemima Linton.

Miss Jemima Linton was still in that fluctuating period, between girl and woman hood, at which young ladies giggle a great deal, and seem to be always in a flutter, when Mr Simon Silky first met her. She was fair in complexion, with light hair and blue eyes; her face, in short, had all the delicacy of a wax doll, and nearly as much expression. She could say "yes, sir!" and "no, sir!" at the proper intervals in the course of a *tête-à-tête* conversation, and, when warmed a little into familiarity and ease, could even hazard an observation with reference to the weather, without

changing colour above twice in the course of it. In a word, she was one of those excessively bashful and retiring young ladies, who always look as if they thought a man was going to make violent love to them, and who, if your conversation happen to diverge from the beaten track of the smallest of small talk, take fright, and are off as fast as possible to whisper to some of their companions, "La! what a strange man that is!"

This was the very kind of person for Mr Simon Silky, who was a bit of a sentimentalist in his way. When he met Miss Jemima Linton, the fair ideal on whom his fancy had often dwelt seemed to be realised. He came, he saw, and was conquered.

On entering Mrs Greenwood's drawing-room, one evening that he had been invited there to meet "a few friends in an easy way," having arrived rather late, he found the party already assembled. The fire blazed cheerfully out upon a bevy of tittering misses, who were seated on either side of it, whispering to each other in a timid and confidential tone, with here and there a young man amongst them making convulsive efforts to render himself amusing, while two or three putty-faced juniors, with very white shirt-collars, and very brightly-polished pumps—who had been called in to stop gaps in quadrilles, and render themselves otherwise useful—sat in the background, for the most part two on a chair, and speculating how many of the cakes that glistened on the table they might appropriate to themselves with any degree of decency. Mrs Humphrey Greenwood, the presiding divinity of this motley gathering, vulgarly yclept a "cookie-shine," was planted behind a brightly-burnished brass urn of liberal dimension, that hissed loudly on the table.

"Mr Simon," she exclaimed, advancing from her post of honour—"Mr Simon Silky, I'm so glad to see you; I really thought you had been going to desert us."

Our hero blustered out some inarticulate apology, to which his hostess of course paid no attention, but hurried on into the work of introduction.

"Mr Silky, Miss Silliman, Miss Gingerly, Miss Barbara Silliman, Miss Eggemon, Miss Jemima Linton; I think you know all the rest. Mr Scratcherd, you know Mr Silky." Mr Scratcherd grinned an assent. "Mr Silky, Mr Slap'emup. You'll find a seat for yourself somewhere. Try if some of the ladies will have pity, and take you in among them."

All this time, Mr Silky was engaged in distributing a comprehensive bow to everybody about him—an ordeal which, in any circumstances, to a nervous man like him, was no joke. But his agitation had the finishing touch given it by Mrs Greenwood's facetious observation as to the ladies *taking him* IN *among them*. The blood rushed to his temples, and he subsided into a vacant chair, with a remark, directed to nobody in particular, as to how very warm the room was. Attention having been once drawn to this interesting fact, it became the topic of conversation for some five minutes, which gave Mr Simon Silky time to cool down, and to look about him a little. In the course of his survey, his eyes alighted on Miss Jemima Linton, who just at that moment happened to be scrutinising his outward man. Their eyes met; a glance of quick intelligence passed between them. The lady lowered hers, blushing up to them as she did so; and the enraptured Simon muttered to himself, "What charming confusion!" He felt a novel sensation gathering about his heart. Could it be love? At first sight, too. Many deny it, but we say that all genuine love is at first sight.

"He never loved, who loved not at first sight."

Mr Simon Silky was a reader of the Beauties of Shakpere. This line took possession of his head, and he mused and looked, looked and mused, till he was roused from his reverie by Mrs Greenwood calling upon him to assist in

handing round the "cups which cheer but not inebriate." He started up, with a very vague notion of what he was to be about, and grasping a tea-cup, which his hostess informed him was Miss Jemima Linton's, in one hand, and a plate of cheesecakes in the other, he stumbled up to the lady, and consigning the cakes to her outstretched hand, held out the tea-cup to Miss Eggemon, who sat next, inquiring if she would please to be helped to a little cake. Miss Eggemon tittered, and exclaimed,

"Well, I never!"

"Gracious! the like of that, you know!" simpered Miss Silliman, burying her face in Miss Eggemon's neck.

"How very absurd!" sneered Miss Gingerly, who was verging to old-maidishness, and had a temper in which vinegar was the principal ingredient.

"Bless me, Mr Silky! what *are* you about?" cried Mrs Greenwood.

"Oh—why—yes—no—I see—beg pardon—dear me!" stammered poor Silky, reddening like an enraged turkey-cock, as he handed Miss Linton the cup, out of which the greater part of its contents had by this time been shaken. and seizing the dish of cakes with a sudden jerk, deposited one-half of them in the lady's lap, and the other half on the carpet.

"Tell me, where is fancy bread?" said Mr Horatio Slap'emup, who was a wit in his own small way, pointing to the cakes, which our hero was endeavouring to bring together again from the different corners into which they had wandered. A general laugh greeted him on every side as he rose from his knees covered with confusion. He looked at the fair Jemima as he did so. There was not the vestige of a smile on her face. "Good kind soul! *she* does not join in the vulgar mirth of these unfeeling creatures!" thought the unhappy Silky. "She pities me, and pity is akin to love." It did not strike him that there might be

another reason for her gravity. The spilled tea and greasy cheesecake had spoiled her white muslin dress irremediably, for that night at least—a circumstance calculated certainly to make any young lady melancholy enough; but this never entered the brain of Mr Simon Silky. Happy man!

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

With some difficulty he regained his chair, after stumbling over a footstool, and crushing the tail of a King Charles cocker, that was snorting on the hearthrug in all the offensiveness of canine obesity. His distress was at its climax.

"When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions," thought he, recurring once more to the Beauties of Shakspere. His ears felt as if they had been newly scalded, and objects floated in hazy confusion before his eyes. He commenced sipping his tea with desperate energy, wishing for a moment that it had been so much prussic acid. The patter of many voices sounded in his ears. They must be talking of him, "for they laughed consumedly;" and that confounded Slap'emup was obviously getting up a reputation for wit by cutting minute jokes at his expense.

"You've been at the Exhibition, Mr Silky," said Mrs Greenwood, recalling him from the state of mental imbecility into which he was fast sinking.

"The Exhibition, you said, ma'am! Yes, yes, certainly, the Exhibition. Oh yes!" rejoined Mr Silky, struggling to concentrate his scattered faculties.

"Well, what is your opinion about the portrait?" continued his hostess.

"Portrait, really—which of them—there's so many?"

"Why, Mr Silky, what *has* come over you to-night? The ladies have been like to pull each other to pieces, for the last five minutes, about the portrait of an officer a little to the left of the door of the first room; and, I declare, you have not heard a word that has been going. Pretty doings,

Mr Simon; and who, may I ask, is the happy lady that so engrosses your thoughts?"

"Oh, Mrs Greenwood!"

"Well, well, then, if it's a secret, I won't press it! But what is your opinion of the portrait? Miss Barbara Silliman here maintains it is beauty in the abstract."

"Oh he's quite a love of a man!" broke in Miss Barbara, in a rapture of affectation; whereat Miss Gingerly appeared mightily shocked, and pursed up her mouth till it looked like a parched apple.

"But Miss Linton, on the contrary, says she thinks it rather plain for a military man. Now, we want your decision on this knotty point."

"Oh, why, really—a portrait of an officer, I think you said. Fair complexion, flaxen ringlets, and light blue eyes—beautiful, indeed! That is to say—I don't know; but"—and here poor Silky looked hopelessly about for an idea—"upon the whole, I think I declare for Miss Linton."

"Well, really, Mr Simon, that *is* coming to the point. Jemima, my dear, do you hear what Mr Silky says? Declares for you already! Upon my word, a fair proposal!" said Mrs Greenwood, catching up the allusion, and looking excessively matronly and significant.

"Fair complexion, flaxen ringlets, light blue eyes!" broke in Miss Barbara Silliman, with that delicate spitefulness to which young ladies are subject, when they suspect any of their rivals of having produced an impression on one of the male creatures. "A pretty officer, indeed! It's you, Miss Linton, that Mr Silky means. Quite a conquest, I declare." Having said this for the benefit of the company, she murmured to herself, "I wonder at the man's taste. A gawky minx!"

If Mr Silky felt uncomfortable before, he was now reduced to the lowest pitch of personal misery. He tried to smile, as if he took the thing as a good joke; but the contortions

of his visage were galvanic. Everybody, he was sure, was looking at him, and he stammered out some inarticulate words, by way of extricating himself from his awkward position. What they were he knew not; but they only seemed to have made matters worse; for another titter ran round the circle, and showers of badinage assailed him on every side. Mr Simon Silky began to speculate whether sitting on the points of a score of red-hot toasting-forks could be worse than his present torment.

He was pursuing this agreeable train of reflection, when the removal of the table to a corner of the room, and a general commotion, occasioned by the pushing back of sofas, and the laying away of chairs, made him aware that dancing was about to commence. The men, as they always do on these occasions, clustered together near the door, pulling on gloves —such of them as had them—and talking very thick and fast about nothing at all.

"Miss Gingerly, may I ask you to give the young folks a set of quadrilles?" inquired Mrs Greenwood.

"Certainly—with a great deal of pleasure," coldly responded Miss Gingerly, blowing her nose with the end of her pocket-handkerchief, which she extracted partially from her black satin bag for the purpose, and feeling particularly venomous at being cut out of the dance, and her very, very faint chance of captivating a partner therein.

"Oh, thank you," said Miss Eggemon, laying her hands affectionately on Miss Gingerly's wrists. "You play quadrilles so nicely." And then turning to Miss Jemima Linton, Miss Eggemon whispered, confidentially, "Such a player you never heard. Not three bars in time. How provoking Mrs Greenwood should ask her to play. Just listen; did you ever hear the like of that?"

Miss Gingerly had laid her black satin bag on the piano, drawn herself up with all the frosty-faced dignity of waning maidenhood, and was performing a prelude before commenc-

ing operations, which was chiefly remarkable for its ingenious flights from key to key, and bewildering accumulation of false concords.

"Gentlemen, find partners for yourselves," said the lively Mrs Greenwood; and the gentlemen, after looking at one another, disentangled themselves from the knot into which they were gathered, and, shuffling up each to the lady that pleased his fancy, solicited the honour of her hand. The couples had taken their places, and Miss Gingerly was dashing away into the heart of the "Highland Laddie," when it was discovered that there was still a couple awanting.

"Mr Silky, you dance?" said all the men at once to that gentleman, who was sitting pensively in a corner.

"Oh, really!" replied Silky, smiling a sickly smile, and making vague protestations of inability.

"Not dance!" said the vivacious Mr Slap'emup. "Fie on you!—oh, fie! And Miss Linton looking at you there, like Eve on the eve of Paradise, as if

'She would be woo'd, and not unsought be won.'"

There was nothing for it but that Silky should make up to Miss Jemima, and lead her out to dance. This he did among the nods, and winks, and whispers of all present; and by the time he got into his place in the quadrille, he did not very well know which end of him was uppermost. Away rattled Miss Gingerly at the "Highland Laddie," and away bounced the dancers through the mazes of the figure. Dancing a quadrille is with some people no trifling matter, and Mr Simon Silky was one of these. He bent to it all the energies of his not over-powerful mind; and, while it lasted, beyond a passing word or two, he had no conversation to bestow upon his partner. It was amusing to see with what earnestness he watched the movements of those who preceded him, and, when his own turn came, the exhibition he made would have made a Timor grin. First,

he threw out his arms to steady himself, and then jerking forward his right foot, brought himself suddenly into the centre of the floor, where he began throwing his legs confusedly about, till they seemed to be involved in hopeless entanglement. All the time he kept his eyes fixed anxiously upon his shoe-ties. It was obviously a critical affair with him to preserve his equipoise, and each time that he got back safely to his place, a sigh broke from him, as if a great burden had been taken off his mind, and he wiped the sweat away that glistered in heavy beads upon his brow. At length the quadrille ended. Mr Silky thanked heaven; and, leading the fair Jemima to a seat, planted himself at her side, and manfully endeavoured to open up a conversation with her.

Dance succeeded dance, and by degrees the elements of the party got tolerably well interfused. Poor Miss Gingerly wrought away at her everlasting set of Scotch quadrilles, and nobody ever volunteered to relieve her of her task, "she played so well." At intervals some of the young ladies quivered through a fashionable ballad, and occasionally an attempt was made to get up one of those melancholy chants, which, by some strange misnomer, pass current in society for glees. In these, Mr Scratcherd, who sang bass, distinguished himself so signally, that loud calls were made upon him for a song, and Mr Scratcherd, after a little preliminary modesty, yielded to the call. He then began raving about an "Old Oak Tree," and groaned up and down the scale, till his voice became lost in the bottom of his neckcloth. Serious fears were entertained whether he would be able to get it up again, but these happily turned out to be unfounded. Again his voice mounted to its natural level, and after rolling about for some time, "grating harsh discord," wore itself out in a cadence of confused gutturals. "Bravo, bravo," cried the men. "A very fine quality of bass," exclaimed his friend, Slap'emup,

who affected to be a judge; and Mr Scratcherd blew his nose, and fell back in his chair in a state of great personal satisfaction.

With a thoughtful regard for the comforts of her guests, Mrs Greenwood had, early in the evening, thrown open her little back drawing-room, in which were placed abundance of refreshments, to sustain them through the fatigues of dancing and conversation. By a succession of visits to this room, Mr Simon Silky had succeeded in giving firmness to his nerves. He was gradually becoming less and less bashful. There must have been something bracing about the atmosphere of the apartments, for to this, and not to the bottle of port, to which he was observed to have frequent recourse, must be attributed that jauntiness of step and slipshod volubility of tongue which he now displayed. He danced every dance, and for the most part with Miss Jemima for his partner. What though his uncouth gestures provoked a smile, and his assiduities to the young lady were commented on at every hand. He cared not. His spirit was in the third heaven of exaltation, and the whole world might go hang for him.

"Miss Linton," he exclaimed, seizing her hand fervently —they were seated on a sofa in the back drawing-room, while the others were labouring through a country-dance in the front—"Miss Linton, hear me for a moment. Let me use this opportunity of stating what I have long felt—what I now feel—what I shall always feel." And again Mr Silky pressed her hand tenderly in both of his.

"Oh, sir!" timidly responded the lady.

"Yes, adorable Jemima! I can no longer repress my emotion. You see before you a victim to your charms. The moment I beheld you, I don't know how it was, but my heart thrilled with a transport delightful as it was new. I felt—I felt—in short, I felt as I never felt before. My senses forsook me, and I said and did I know not what. These

soulless creatures treated my confusion with ridicule; but, in your eyes, methought I could read pity, compassion, commiseration, sympathy. Say, was I right, or was I misled by the fond delusions of my own passion?"

"Oh, sir!" again exclaimed the bewildered Jemima.

"That look! I was not then deceived. Oh extend that pity into love! I lay myself and my fortune at your feet." And here Mr Simon Silky slipped off the sofa and down upon his knees, overcome partly with love and partly with intoxication. "Dearest Jemima! say only that you will be mine?"

"Oh, sir!" once more sighed the blushing maiden, dropping her head upon the shoulder of her suitor, who acknowledged the movement by snatching a kiss from her pouting lips.

"Ods! that came twangingly off. I'm afraid we're like to spoil sport here," exclaimed Mr Slap'emup, who at this moment entered the room, with Miss Gingerly on his arm.

"Gracious! how very improper!" cried Miss Gingerly, wishing from the depth of her soul that it had only been her own case.

"What's improper, ma'am?" retorted Silky, turning to her a look of drunken gravity, and endeavouring, with no little difficulty, to get on his legs again. "If I choose to kiss this young lady, or this young lady chooses to kiss me, that's no business of yours, I suppose? 'Have not saints lips, and holy palmers, too?' as the divine Shakspere says; and what are lips for, I should like to know, if not to kiss? Don't frown at me, Miss Gravcairs. I'm a man—a man, ma'am, and I shall do just as I please. Shan't I, Jemima, dear?"

He turned for an answer to his appeal; but the young lady had left the room.

"Jemima, I say," continued Silky, getting more and more overcome. He looked around the room; and, finding no

trace of the lady, began chanting in a lackadaisical tone—

'And has she then fail'd in her truth,
The beautiful maid I adore?'

But I don't care that for her!" And he tried to snap his fingers; but failed in the attempt. "It's an ungrateful world—a vile world."

"Oh, gracious me! let me away," exclaimed Miss Gingerly, in alarm. "He's certainly tipsy."

"Tipsy—tipsy! Who's tipsy? Let me see her. Woman, woman, to get yourself into such a state! I'm ashamed of you; I am indeed. But it's the weakness of the sex.

'Frailty, thy name is woman!'"

This apostrophe was addressed to some visionary female that flitted before Mr Silky's mental optics, and whom he followed, with his hands groping before him, with the voice and gesture of Mr Charles Kean pursuing the airdrawn dagger in the character of Macbeth. "Laugh away; it's very amusing, isn't it? Nero fiddled while Rome was burning; but I know better."

"Mr Silky, you'll better go home," said Mrs Greenwood, who, with the remainder of the party, had by this time entered the room.

"Home! exactly so. I *am* at home, my charmer—perfectly at home; and you're at home; we're all at home. But no more wine, Mrs Greenwood; temperance and tectotalism for ever. We are beset with temptations in this wicked world—temptations, I say—Jemima, you're an angel! It is as much as a man can do to preserve his uprightness." And, in proof that it was more than he could, down rolled our hero on the floor, in a profound stupor.

"Carry Master Silence to bed," remarked the ingenious Slap'emup, highly tickled with the catastrophe that had befallen the too—too bashful Silky.

A coach was procured, and he was conveyed to his lodg-

ings, where the sun found him in bed at noon next day. His dreams had been of the most ghastly kind. He had fancied himself compelled, by a fiend, to swallow huge goblets of port wine, strongly adulterated with brimstone, and dragged about by a fury, who held his neck within a halter. The fiend was Slap'emup—the fury, Miss Jemima Linton. He started from his dream, and with his hand pressed against his aching head, fell to adjusting the confused reminiscences of the previous evening's proceedings. He remembered nothing but that he had proposed for the hand of some young lady or other, and had been accepted. Well for him it was that memory went no farther, or he would never have found courage to visit Mrs Greenwood again. That he did visit her again, however, may be inferred from an announcement which the newspapers, not many weeks after, gave to the public:—

"Married at Edinburgh, on the 6th instant, Mr Simon Silky to Miss Jemima Linton."

THE RECLUSE OF THE HEBRIDES.

"Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ne'er
But with the closing tomb."—BURNS.

I RESIDED some years ago in the Island of Tyree, which is one of the most western of the Hebrides; and, in the course of my business, had often occasion to cross by the base of Ben Chinevarah, whose rugged and sterile appearance impresses the mind with a sickening sadness. The narrow footpath sometimes dives into the deep and sullen gloom of the mountain glen, whose silence is unbroken, save by the torrent's red rush, and again winds along the edge of the steep precipice, among the loose rocks that have been hurled from their beds aloft by the giant efforts of time, where the least false step would precipitate the unwary traveller into the abyss below. There no cheering sound of mirth was ever heard, the blithe whistle of the ploughman never swelled upon its echoes, nor often did the reaper's song disturb its gloomy silence. The ear is assailed, on the one hand, by the discordant and dismal notes of the screech-owl; and, on the other, by the angry roar of the waves that beat, with ceaseless lash, the broken shore. A small hut now and then bursts upon the view, raising its lowly roof beneath the shelter of the mountain rock, and adds to the cheerlessness of the scene. One of those small cottages often attracted my notice, by its external neatness, and the laborious industry by which a small garden had been formed around the dwelling; and by degrees I ingratiated myself

into the good graces of its owner, who, I found, by his knowledge and conversation, was of a different cast from the dwellers around him. I knew by his accent that he was a foreigner; and, feeling an interest in him, I often endeavoured to gain some account from him of the early part of his life; but when the subject was hinted at, he at once changed the conversation.

Having occasion last summer to spend some days at the house of a friend in Argyleshire, I availed myself of this opportunity to visit my old acquaintance at Tyree. I found him stretched on the bed of sickness, and fast verging towards his end. When last I had seen him, his appearance, though infirm, evinced but few signs of physical decay; and, though the storms of scores of winters had blown over him, still his eye sparkled with animation, and his raven locks retained the fresh and jetty colour of the native of "Italia's sunny clime." But now, how changed the appearance! His eyeballs were dim, deep sunken in their sockets; a few scattered grey hairs waved carelessly over his finely-arched eyebrows; and his forehead and cheeks were deeply furrowed with the traces of sickness and secret wo. When I entered the lowly dwelling, he raised his lacklustre eyes, and stretched forth his hand to meet my grasp.

"And is Heaven yet so kind," said he, raising his wasted hand in thanks to the Disposer of all good, "as to send one pitying friend to soothe my dreary and departing moments? Ah, sir, the hand of the grim tyrant is laid heavily upon me, and I must soon appear in the presence of an offended Deity. If you knew how awful are the feelings of a mind loaded with iniquity, of a soul immersed in guilt, when the last moment is approaching that separates us from mortality, and the misdeeds of a wicked life stand in ghastly array, adding stings to an already seared conscience, you would shrink at what you now deem the gay dreams of

youthful frailty, and shun the delusive and seducing snares of a wretched world."

Pointing to a block of wood alongside his pallet bed, he desired me to be seated, and, after drying the tear of sorrow from his swollen eye, he thus proceeded:—

"Often, in those moments when the sweet beams of health were mine, have you desired a recital of the events of my past life; but a feeling of shame withheld me from the task. Now, when I have nothing to fear but death and the dread hereafter, if you will have the patience to hear me, I will briefly unfold to you the causes which reduced me from a state of affluence, to become a fugitive amid the rugged rocks and the inclement skies of a foreign land."

I assented, and he went on with his story.

"My name," said he, "in the more fortunate years of my life, was Alphonso; and the city of Venice gave me birth. I was the only child of an opulent citizen, and need scarcely inform you that no restraint was laid upon my inclinations when a child; and the dawn of manhood beheld me plunged amid every intemperance which that luxurious city then afforded. Money was plentifully supplied me by my parents to support my extravagances; and I sought after happiness among the rounds of pleasure and the gay circles of society; but I only met with desires ungratified, hopes often frustrated, and wishes never satisfied. I had a friend. He was called Theodore. I loved him as dearly as a selfish being like myself *could* love any one. He shared in all my pleasures.

"An amorous, jealous, and revengeful disposition is commonly laid to the share of the Italians; and, with sorrow I confess, that formed the principal ingredient of my character. I had reached my twentieth year of thoughtlessness and folly, when, one night at the opera, a young lady in an opposite box attracted my attention; and my eyes were insensibly riveted upon the beauteous figure. I need not tell

you that she was beautiful—she was loveliness itself. I will not trespass on your time in describing the new and pleasing sensations that arose in my bosom; you have trod the magic paths of pleasure, and bowed to the charms of beauty: they are not unknown to you.

"I felt that all my libertine pursuits had only been the shadows of pleasure; and from that moment I determined to abandon them, and fix my love on her alone. We became acquainted, and I found that she was as worthy of the purest love as my fond wishes desired. She was the only child of Count Rudolpho; and, for the space of three months, I was a constant visiter at her father's palazzo. In due time I pleaded the force of my love. But what were the sensations of my soul, when the tear started from her eye of beauty, and the dreadful sentence burst upon my ear—'I am the bride of Theodore!'

"I burst from her presence with a palpitating heart, and returned homewards, agitated by the conflicting passions of despair and revenge. I drew my sword from its sheath, and promised the blood of Theodore, of the friend of my bosom, to its point. The steel trembled in my grasp as the vow fell from my lips, and my heart recoiled at the idea of shedding blood; but the still small voice was an unequal match with the baneful principles of a corrupted soul."

The recluse stopped, and the loud sobs of sorrow and repentance alone burst upon the gloomy silence of the scene. The hectic flush of fever played and wantoned across his pallid features, as if it seemed to exult in the weakness of mortality, and delight in the loveliness of its own soul-loathed ravages. The tears dropped large and plentiful from his eyes, and his spirit seemed bended and broken with the racking remembrance. I bent over the wasted form of the wretched penitent, and while I poured the voice of comfort in his ear, and wiped the tears from his

eyes, his soul resumed its wonted firmness, and even a smile beamed upon his blanched lips, as he grasped my hand, and pressed it to his bosom in silence, and with thankfulness.

"Behold!" said he, drawing an old sword from beneath the side of his miserable straw pallet—"behold this steel, red-rusted with the blood of Theodore, from which the bitter tears of sixty long winters have been unable to efface the stain. Pardon the feelings of an infirm old man. My soul weeps blood at the remembrance.

"I pitched upon the bridal eve of Theodore for that of his death, and the seizure of his bride; and hired the leader of a band of ruffians to assist me in the scheme. The fatal night, so big with horror, at last arrived. The sun sank sullenly into the shades of the west, and his departing gleams glanced redly and angrily upon me. The raven wings of early night fell upon Venice; and I stepped into my gondola, with my hired followers. We set forward upon our errand. The palazzo of Count Albert was soon gained. Busy nature waxed calm and hushed; the artisan had retired to the sweets of his lowly but happy cottage; the convent-bell had tolled, solemn and slow, the vesper knell; and then

'Uprose the yellow moon,'

silvering the rippling waters of the canals, and glancing its beams upon the glittering palaces of Venice. It was a lovely night; but my soul ill brooked the calm grandeur of the scene.

"By the treachery of a servant, my comrades were admitted into Count Rudolpho's grounds, whilst I attended the nuptial rites with the well-dissembled face of friendship. Joy was dancing in every eye but mine. My hand trembled at times on the hilt of my poniard, and I awaited the favourable moment with a degree of impatience bordering on frenzy. Many a fair maid was there, tripping amid the

joyous throng, whose beauty might have warmed the frigid heart of an anchorite; but my eyes and mind were upon the dear, dear Violetta: she was lovelier than ever, but—she was the spouse of Theodore.

"The garden of the count was remarkably beautiful, and the trees in it had been grandly festooned with variegated lamps on the present occasion. The night was pleasant and calm, and the youthful couple retired from the crowded saloon to the garden for a few minutes, to enjoy the freshness of nature. I silently followed, unperceived, till they seated themselves in an arbour, whose beauty was unworthy of a villain's tread. Then suddenly I presented myself at the entrance; and the unsuspicious Theodore rose to embrace me. How shall I give utterance to the rest? My friend rose to embrace me; and I drew my poniard, and was about to plunge it into his bosom, when Violetta, whose attention this action had not escaped, rushed between us, to stay my hand. Horror! her heart received the blow I had intended for her husband. She uttered a piercing cry, and fell, a bleeding corpse, at my feet.

"The sound attracted the attention of my ruffianly associates, who were ready at hand to carry off the bride, and they hurried to the spot. Theodore, at first surprised and terror-stricken, now roused himself to energy. With the fury of a maniac, he rushed upon me, and felled me senseless to the earth. How long I lay in this situation I know not; but when my senses returned, the palazzo was in flames, and the clashing of swords and the groans of the wounded sounded horribly in my ears. And this was my doing. I had been the means of introducing into Count Rudolpho's grounds a band of desperadoes, to whom bloodshed was familiar; and I doubted not that they were at their work of blood and rapine. I repented of the deed, but it was too late.

"The murdered Violetta lay on the ground at a short

distance from me; the moonbeams played full upon her ghastly and distorted features; and her robes, her bridal robes, were deeply stained with blood. Her pulse had long since ceased to beat, and she felt cold to the touch. Resolved that no profane hand should consign to the earth her blessed remains, I threw the body across my shoulder, and fled with it from the garden. I felt not the weight of the burden, for excitement made me 'hardy as the Némean lion's nerve.' I soon reached the canal, leaped into my gondola with my precious burden, and, shortly afterwards, gained my father's palace. Ere the moon set, I had dug a deep grave in his garden, in which I buried her on whom I had doated, bedewing the earth with my tears as I proceeded in my work.

"It was at length completed; and, with the morning's dawn, I fled from Venice. Despair added wings to my flight, and the land of France received me in her fostering arms. I have, since that time, wandered in many a clime, to wear away my grief, but in vain. I have fought under the banner of your king; and, though my arm was never palsied in the day of battle, death has been denied me. I now lie here, aged and forlorn. The hand of death is heavy on me, and chilly tremors are creeping over my exhausted frame. The just decrees of God have denied me even a friend to close my weary eyes; and my dust must mingle with the dust of strangers, far, far from the sepulchre of my fathers, and the home of my childhood."

After a short pause, the Recluse continued—

"Here, sir," said he, "take this sword—it has been the constant companion of my travels—its blade is unsullied by ignoble blood; and when you look upon it, after the grave receives the wretched Alphonso, it may convey a lesson that volumes could not inculcate."

I received the sword from his hand, which was trembling and cold. He turned his face from me; and before I had

time to speak, a deep groan announced his departure to the mansions of another world. I called the inmates of the adjoining cottage, who took charge of the body; and I left the spot with a feeling which words cannot express, but which will be understood by those who look with the eye of pity upon the errors of a fellow-mortal.

ELLEN ARUNDEL.

Ellen Arundel was the only daughter of an officer in the British service, who, with his sword for his patrimony, had entered early into the profession of arms as the means of maintenance; and he had, accordingly, pursued it with that enthusiastic spirit of honour which is dictated by the considerations of family pride, the hope of fame, the dread of disgrace, and the most ardent love of glory.

The utmost height, however, to which he had risen, when he committed the folly of matrimony, by uniting his destiny to that of the portionless daughter of a venerable, respectable, unbeneficed clergyman, was that of a lieutenant in a foot regiment. By dint of careful management on the part of his wife, they contrived to live happily together, nor did the increase of their family—for Ellen made her appearance within the first year after their marriage—add to their difficulties.

In the care and superintendence of their darling daughter, did their years roll on in humble content. If they heaved a sigh, it was for their Ellen's future welfare; if they breathed a wish, it was to see her placed in a situation which might guard her against the attacks of poverty, and the designs of iniquity. From the former, they were aware, beauty and accomplishments would prove no shield; and they trembled when they reflected that they might prove the most powerful incitement to the latter. The sweets of life are not to be enjoyed without its accompanying embitterments. The regiment in which Mr Arundel served received orders to embark for America, in transports already prepared for the reception of the British forces. On the

communication of this intelligence, so subversive of their little plans of economy and felicity, Mrs Arundel earnestly entreated that she and Ellen might be the companions of his voyage. For awhile Mr Arundel would not consent to this, from a fear of incurring expense which they were unable to support; but all the difficulties which the narrowness of their finances suggested were obviated by a thousand little arrangements, the ingenious devices of love; and the command of a company, which was conferred upon him before the embarkation, relieved them from their anxiety.

Few events happened, either during their voyage, or on their arrival at Boston, except that the assiduities of a young officer of another regiment, who accompanied them in the transport, seemed to have made some impression on the heart of Ellen Arundel. She listened to his tales of love, with the full sanction of her parents, and sighed out the confession that his passion was returned. Mr Meredith was formed on the model which Captain Arundel had, in idea, fixed on for the husband of his Ellen. To the qualifications of a soldier, he added those which most highly adorn private life; nor was his income limited, for he was the only son of a gentleman of fortune. But both Captain Arundel and Mr Meredith were too regardful of decency and propriety to hasten an event of so much importance, till the father of the young gentleman had been made acquainted with the attachment; and letters from Captain Arundel and the lover were, accordingly, prepared, for the purpose of being despatched to Europe by the first ship that should sail.

But alas! these precautions were soon rendered unnecessary, by events which dissolved the bonds of affection. On that day when the attack of Bunker's Hill occasioned a carnage which thinned the British ranks, Captain Arundel and Mr Meredith stood foremost in the bloody contest. Accident

had placed them in the same brigade: they fought and fell together. The body of the young officer was carried off by the Americans; and the mortally-wounded captain conveyed to the habitation of his wretched wife and daughter, where, shortly afterwards, he expired.

The keen and piercing anguish felt by Ellen and her mother, in consequence of this sorrowful event, had changed to silent and corroding melancholy, when they embarked for their native land, after having received every attention which the governor and garrison could offer as a tribute to the memory of the deceased. On their arrival in Britain, a pension was granted to Mrs Arundel, which, in the event of her death, was to be continued to her daughter; and with this they retired to a small village northward of the Scottish metropolis, where a maiden sister of Captain Arundel, who was remarkably fond of Ellen, resided.

But, as no retirement will conceal the charms of beauty, nor any circle, however confined, prevent the fame of accomplishments from spreading beyond its limit, Mr Newton, a widower of independent fortune, not much past the prime of life, having been told of Ellen, resolved to visit the Arundels. An opportunity soon presented itself. The house which the ladies inhabited was advertised for sale; and, under pretence of an intention to purchase, he wrote Mrs Arundel, desiring to know when it would be convenient for him to call; to which Mrs Arundel returned a polite answer, naming an early day.

Mr Newton went; and, after he had viewed the house and gardens with the air of an intending purchaser, Mrs Arundel, desirous of cultivating the acquaintance of so distinguished a neighbour, asked him to stay tea; which being unhesitatingly accepted, he was introduced to the fair, the amiable, the still mourning Ellen. Prepared by the universal voice to admire, love was the immediate consequence of a visit, which he requested leave to repeat, in

terms with which civility could not refuse to comply; and a few weeks confirmed Mr Newton the ardent and the professed lover of Ellen. But her heart was still engaged; nor could she abandon even a hopeless passion. The character, the fortune, the unobjectionable person of Mr Newton, were urged to her, by her only friends, with such energy, but mildness, of persuasion, that, enforced by the declarations of her admirer, she was prevailed upon to promise him her hand, though not her heart; and a day was named for the celebration of their nuptials.

The necessary preparations now engaged the attention of Mr Newton and the two matron ladies; whilst Ellen passively yielded to the assiduities of her friends, and suffered the adornments of her person, and the intended provisions of settlement to be adjusted, without once interfering.

A few mornings before the appointed day, as Ellen was seated at breakfast with her mother and aunt, a note was put into her hands. She saw at a glance that it was from Mr Newton; and she immediately handed it across the table to Mrs Arundel, who read:—

"MADAM,—That your heart is not at all interested in the intended event, you have, with candour, frequently acknowledged to me. You will not, therefore, even wish to receive an apology for my releasing you from an unsuitable engagement.

"My long-lost son—my son whom I had for years resigned to Heaven—is restored to me; and Providence, which has bestowed on me this consummate happiness, will not permit me to add to it a wish which concerns myself. He is young; he is amiable; and more worthy of your regard than I am. It is my sincere wish that he should become your husband. I shall, therefore, take an early opportunity of introducing him to you.

"My real name is *not* what you have hitherto considered it to be. I changed it when, on the supposed death of my

son, I retired from my usual place of residence to a distant part of the kingdom, to avoid the importunities of some worthless relations; but, until I have the honour of disclosing to you in person my real name, I beg to subscribe myself, Madam, yours very truly,

"J. B. NEWTON.

"*To Miss Ellen Arundel.*"

When this most extraordinary epistle was read, Ellen turned deadly pale, and would certainly have fallen to the ground, had not a young man entered through the window which opened out on the lawn, and caught her in his arms. He was followed by Mr Newton.

"Ellen," exclaimed the latter, "behold my son!"

The sorrowing girl cast her eyes upon the form of him who held her.

"Meredith!" she cried, and threw herself, weeping, upon his shoulder. Her tears were tears of joy. Little more remains to tell. Ellen Arundel gave her hand to the son on the very day which had been appointed for her nuptials with the father.

CHATELARD.

Some time after the unfortunate Queen Mary had established her court at Holyrood, on her return from France, to ascend the throne of her ancestors, a stranger arrived at a certain tavern or hostelry, kept by one Goodal, at the foot of the Canongate of Edinburgh. The former had last come from Leith, where he had been landed from a French vessel some two or three hours previously. He was a young man, probably about three or four and twenty, tall and handsome in person, of a singularly pleasing countenance, and of mild and exceedingly gentleman-like demeanour. His lofty forehead and expressive eye bespoke the presence of genius, or, at least, of an intellect of a very high order; while his general manners indicated a refined and cultivated mind. There was marked, however, on the brow of the interesting stranger very palpable traces of saddening thoughts—his whole countenance, indeed, exhibiting the characteristics of a deep and rooted melancholy; but it was of a gentle kind, and bore no likeness to the stern gloominess of disappointed ambition. His sadness was evidently a sadness of the heart—the result of some grievous pressure on its best and tenderest feelings and affections.

After having partaken of some refreshment, the stranger desired a small measure of wine to be brought him. This order was executed by mine host in person; and, indeed, from what afterwards followed, it seemed to have been given with an express view to that result; for, on the landlord's placing the wine before his guest, the latter requested him, with great politeness of manner, to sit down and share

it with him; saying that he wanted a little information on two or three particular points. Mine host, seating himself as desired, expressed his readiness to afford him any information of which he himself was possessed. Having thanked the former for his civility, and pressed him, not in vain, to taste of his own wine, the stranger said—

"Is the queen, my friend, just now at Holyrood?"

He was answered in the affirmative. The querist paused, sighed, and next inquired if she walked much abroad—what were the hours she devoted to that recreation—whether she was accompanied by many attendants on these occasions—and whether her ordinary promenade was a place easy of access. Having been informed on all these points, he again relapsed into thought, and again sighed profoundly. After a short time, however, he once more recovered himself, and suddenly exclaimed, but more by way of soliloquy than inquiry—

"Is she not beautiful—transcendently beautiful?"

Mine host, who was not a little surprised by the abruptness of the question, and the enthusiasm of manner in which it was expressed, replied, that she surely was "Just as bonny a creature as he had ever clapt ee on—a plump, sonsy, nice-lookin lass."

A slight expression of disgust, or rather of horror, at the homely terms employed by mine host in speaking of the beauty of the queen, passed over the countenance of his guest. It was, however, but momentary, and was not observed, or at any rate not understood, by him whose language had called it forth.

"Ay, beautiful is she," went on the enthusiastic stranger, leaning back in his chair, and gazing on the roof, in a fit of ecstasy, and in seeming unconsciousness of the presence of a third party—"beautiful is she to look upon, as is the rising sun emerging from the purpled east; beautiful as his setting amidst the burnished clouds of the west; lovely as

the full moon hanging midway in her field of azure; grateful to the sight as the green fields of spring, or the flowers of the garden; and pleasant to the ear are the tones of her voice, as the song of the nightingale in the grove, or the sound of the distant waterfall."

Here the speaker paused in his rhapsody, continued silent for some moments, then suddenly returning, as it were, to a sense of the circumstances in which he was placed, he brought his hands over his forehead and eyes, as one recovering from an agony of painful and melancholy thoughts. Surprised by this extraordinary conduct of his guest, the landlord of the house began to conceive that he had got into the company of a madman; yet he marvelled much what description of madness it could be, since it was made evident only when the queen was spoken of—the stranger speaking on all other subjects rationally and composedly.

"She walks not much abroad, you say, my friend?" said the latter, resuming the conversation which he had broken off to give utterance to the rhapsody which has just been quoted.

"Very seldom, sir," replied mine host; "for ye see she doesna fin hersel quite at hame yet amang us; but she'll come to by and by, I've nae doot."

"And she is not easy of access, you say—no chance of one being able to throw himself in her way?"

"Unco little, I should think," replied mine host, "unless she could be fa'n in wi' gaun to the chapel to mass; for she still abides by thae abominations, for a' John Knox can say till her."

A flush of resentment and indignation crossed the pale countenance of the stranger at the last expressions of the innkeeper, and he threw a glance at him strongly expressive of these feelings, but suddenly checked himself, paused for a moment, and then resumed his queries in the calm and gentle tones which seemed natural to him—

"How likes she the country, know ye?"

"Indeed, I canna weel say," replied mine host; "but I rather doot, frae what I hear, she's no athegither reconciled till't yet. She thinks, I daursay, we're rather a roughspun set o' folk—a wee thing coorse i' the grain or sae."

"Ay, that ye are, that ye are," said the stranger, with more candour than courtesy, again throwing himself back in his chair, and again beginning to rhapsodise as before. "She is among ye—the beautiful, the gentle, the accomplished, the refined—as a fawn amongst a herd of bears. She is in your wild and savage land, like a lovely and tender flower growing in the cleft of a rock—a sweet and gentle thing, blooming alone in the midst of rudeness and barrenness. Oh, uncongenial soil! Oh, discordant association! Dearest, cruellest, loveliest of thy sex!"

If mine host was amazed at the first outpouring of his guest's excited mind, it will readily be believed that it was not lessened by this second ebullition of fervour and passion. He, in truth, now became convinced that he was distracted; and, under this impression, felt a strong desire to be quit of him as soon as possible. With this view, he took an early opportunity of stealing unobserved out of the apartment—a feat which he found no difficulty in performing, as his guest seemed ultimately so wholly wrapped up in his own thoughts, as to be quite unconscious of what was either said or done in his presence. Soon after mine host had retired, the stranger ordered paper, pen, and ink to be brought him. They were placed upon his table, he himself the while walking up and down the apartment with measured stride and downcast look, as if again lost in profound and perplexing thought; and at intervals the sound of his footsteps, thus traversing his chamber, was heard throughout the whole of the night. The stranger had slept none; he had not even retired to seek repose; but those periods during the night—and they were of considerable length—in

which all was silent in his apartment, were employed in writing; and when morning came, the result of his labours was exhibited in a letter, curiously, or rather fancifully, folded, tied with a green silk thread, and highly perfumed. This letter was addressed on the back, "To the Most Illustrious Princess, Mary, Queen of Scotland."

Having brought the proceedings of the stranger to this point, we will shift the scene to the sitting apartment of the queen in Holyrood. Here, surrounded with her maids, the young and lovely princess was, at the moment of which we speak, engaged in working embroidery, and laughing and chatting with her attendants, amongst whom were two or three young French ladies, who had accompanied her from France. The queen and her maids were thus employed, then, when the gentleman-usher, who stood at the door of the apartment, entered, and, with a low obeisance, presented a letter to the queen. It was the same as that addressed to her by the stranger, and above referred to. The queen took the letter, with a gracious smile, from the person presenting it, and, contemplating it for a moment, before she opened it, with a look of pleased surprise—

"This, sure," she said, "is from none of our Scottish subjects: the fold is French." And she sighed. "It has the cut and fashion of the *billet doux* of St Germains; and," she added, laughing, "the precise flavour, too, I declare. But I should know this handwriting," she went on; "I have seen it before. This, however, will solve the mystery." And she tore the letter open, and was instantly employed in reading it, blushing and smiling by turns, as she proceeded with the perusal. When she had done, "Maria," she said, raising her eyes from the paper, and addressing one of her French ladies, "who, think you, is this letter from?"

"I cannot guess, madam," replied the young lady appealed to.

"Do try," rejoined Mary.

"Nay, indeed, I cannot," said the former, now pausing in her work, and looking laughingly at her mistress. "Perhaps from the Count Desmartine, or from Dufour, or Dubois."

"No, no, no," replied the queen, laughing; "neither of these, Maria; but I will have compassion on your curiosity, and tell you. Would you believe it?—it is from Chatelard, the poet."

"Chatelard!" repeated the maiden, in amazement. "What in all the earth can have brought him here?"

"Nay, I know not," said the queen, blushing, for she guessed, or rather feared, the cause. "But read, and judge for yourself," she added, handing her attendant the letter, which contained a very beautiful laudatory poem, full of passion and feeling, addressed to herself, and which the writer concluded by requesting that he might be permitted to form part of her court; delaring that it would be joy inexpressible to him to be near her person—he cared not in how mean a capacity. The having opportunities of seeing and serving her, he said, would reconcile him to any degradation of rank—to any loss, save that of honour.

"In truth, very pretty verses," said the lady-in-waiting, returning the poem to the queen; "but, methinks, somewhat over-bold."

"Why, I do think so too, Maria," replied Mary. "Chatelard rather forgets himself; but poets, you know, have a license, and I cannot be harsh to the poor young man. It would be cruel, ungenerous, and unworthy of me."

"But what say you, madam, to his request to be attached to your court?"

"Really, as to that, I know not well what to say, indeed," rejoined the queen. "Chatelard, you know, Maria, is a gentleman, both by birth and education. He is accomplished in a very high degree, and of a graceful person and

pleasing manners, and would thus do no discredit to our court; but, I fear me, he might be guilty of some indiscretions—for he is a child of passion as well as song—that might lead himself into danger, and bring some blame on me. Still, I cannot think of rejecting altogether his humble suit, so prettily preferred; and, if he would promise to conduct himself with becoming gravity and reserve in all matters, and at all times, I should have no objection that he was attached to our court. I will, at all events, make trial of him for a short space."

Having said this, the queen, now addressing the ladies present generally, went on—

"Ladies, I will shortly introduce to you a new gallant; but I pray ye take care of your hearts; for he is, I warrant ye, one especially given to purloining these little commodities. He is handsome, accomplished, and a poet; so mind ye, ladies, I have warned you—be on your guard. Kerr," she now called out to a page in waiting, "go to the hostelry whence this letter came, and say to the gentleman by whom it has been sent, that we desire to see him forthwith. Let him accompany you, Kerr."

The page instantly departed; and we will avail ourselves of his short absence on this mission, to say briefly who Chatelard was—what was his object in coming to the Scottish court—and of what nature were the fears which the queen expressed regarding him.

Chatelard, then, was a young French gentleman of rank, of rare accomplishments, and a poet of very considerable excellence. His seeking to attach himself to Mary's court, was the result of a violent and unhappy attachment to her person; and her fears for him, proceeding from a suspicion of this attachment, were, that he would commit himself by some rash expression of his feelings. She was displeased with his presumptuous love, yet found she could not, as a woman, but look on it with pity and compassion; and hence

her disposition to treat with kindness and affability its unhappy victim. Prudence, indeed, would certainly have dictated another course than what Mary pursued with Chatelard, in thus admitting him to her presence; but Mary's error here was an error of the heart, and more to be regretted than blamed.

In a short while after the messenger had been despatched with the invitation to Chatelard, the door of the queen's apartment was thrown wide open, and that person entered. His bow to the queen was exceedingly graceful; and not less so, though measured with scrupulous exactness in their expression of deference, were those he directed to her ladies. Chatelard's countenance was at this instant suffused with a blush, and it was evident he was under the excitement of highly-agitated feelings; but he lost not, for a moment, nor in the slightest degree, his presence of mind; neither did these feelings prevent him conducting himself at this interview with the most perfect propriety.

"Chatelard," said the queen, after the ceremonies of a first salutation were over, "I perceive you have lost none of your cunning in the gentle craft. These were really pretty lines you sent me—choice in expression, and melodiously arranged. I assure thee it is a very happy piece."

"How could it be otherwise, madam," replied Chatelard, bowing low, "with such a subject?"

"Nay, nay," said Mary, laughing and blushing at the same time, "I am no subject, Chatelard, but an anointed queen. Thou canst not make a subject of me."

Chatelard now in turn blushed, and said, smiling, "Your wit, madam, has thrown me out; but, avoiding this play on words, my position is good, undeniable. All men acknowledge it."

"Go to—go to, Chatelard—thou wert ever a flatterer. But 'tis a poet's trade. Thou art a dangerous flatterer, however; for thou dost praise so prettily that one cannot

suspect thy sincerity, nor be angry with thee, even when thou deservest that they should. But enough of this in the meantime. Thou mayst now retire; and I think the sooner the better, for the safety of these fair maidens' hearts, and your own peace of mind, which a longer stay might endanger. Our chamberlain will provide thee with suitable apartments, and see to thy wants. Mark," she added, laughingly, "we retain thee in our service in the capacity of our poet—of court poet—a high and honourable appointment; and thy reward shall be the smiles and approbation of these fair ladies—the beauty of all and each of whom I expect thou wilt forthwith embalm in immortal verse."

Chatelard, bowing, was now about to retire, when the queen, again addressing him, said, "We will send for thee again in the afternoon, to bear us company for awhile, when thou wilt please bring with thee some of thy newest and choicest madrigals."

Expressing a deep sense of the honour proposed to be conferred on him, of the queen's kind condescension, and avowing his devotedness to her service, Chatelard withdrew, and was provided with the promised apartments by the express orders of Mary herself. To these apartments we shall follow the enthusiastic but audacious lover. On being left alone, Chatelard again fell into one of those reveries which we have already described, and again launched into that strain of extravagant adulation which, on another occasion, we represented him as indulging in. Again he compared Mary, in his incoherent ravings, to everything that is beautiful in earth, sea, and sky; but comparing her to these only that he might assert how far she surpassed them. There were mingled, too, with his eulogiums, on this occasion, expressions of that imprudent passion which subsequently at once urged him to commit the most daring offences, and blinded him to their consequences. Poor Chatelard's ravings, in the instance of which we are just speaking, were

unconsciously uttered; but they were unfortunately loud enough to arrest the attention of the domestics, who were passing to and fro in the lobby into which the door of his apartment opened. These, attracted by his rapturous exclamations, listened, from time to time, at his door, and were highly amused with the rhapsodies of the imprudent poet. The latter, becoming more and more vehement, and, in proportion, more entertaining, the domestics finally gathered in a cluster around the door, to the number of six or eight, and, with suppressed laughter, overheard all that the excited and unguarded inmate chose to utter. That, however, was so incoherent, or at least of so high-flown a character, that the listeners could make nothing of it; and, as they could not, they immediately concluded it to be nonsense, and the speaker a madman. But there came one to the spot, at this unfortunate moment, who, with sharper intellect and more apt comprehension, at once discovered the meaning that lurked under the florid language of the poet's ill-timed soliloquies.

While the servants were crowded around the door of Chatelard's apartment, too intent on their amusement to notice the approach of any one, another party, we say, had advanced to within a few paces of where they stood. Here, with his arms folded across his breast, he had remained observed for several seconds, gazing with a look of surprise and displeasure on the merry group assembled around the poet's door. He was, however, at length discovered, when the knot of listeners instantly broke up in the greatest hurry and alarm.

"How now," exclaimed the unexpected intruder—a person of about thirty years of age, of rather slender form, of cold and haughty demeanour, and austere countenance—"How now?" he exclaimed, in a voice whose tones were naturally severe—"what means this idling?—what do ye all here, knaves, in place of attending to your duties?"

Instead of answering this question, the terrified domestics were now endeavouring to make off in all directions; but the querist's curiosity, or perhaps suspicion, having been excited by what he had seen, he instantly arrested their progress, by calling on them, in a voice of increased severity and vehemence, to stop.

"Come hither, Johnstone," he exclaimed, addressing one of the fugitives—"I must know what you have been all about." And, without waiting for an answer, "Who occupies this apartment?" he inquired, pointing to that in which was Chatelard.

"And please ye, my lord," replied Johnstone, bowing with the most profound respect—"ane that we think's no very wise. He's been bletherin awa there to himsel, saving yer honour's presence, like a bubbly-jock, for this half-hour back, and we can neither mak tap, tail, nor mane o' what he's sayin."

"What! a madman, Johnstone?" said the Earl of Murray, the queen's half-brother, for it was no less a personage; then hurriedly added, "Who is he?—what is he?—where is he from?—when came he hither?"

The man answered categorically—

"I dinna ken, my lord, wha he is; but, frae the thinness o' his chafts, I tak him to be ane o' your French laun-loupers. He cam to the palace about twa hours syne."

The earl's curiosity was now still further excited, and, without saying a word more, he drew near to the door of Chatelard's apartment, and became also an auditor of the poor poet's unguarded language; but not such as it was in the case of the listeners who had preceded him; to him that language was perfectly intelligible—at least to the extent of informing him of Chatelard's ambitious love. To Murray this was a secret worth knowing; and, in the hope that he might discover this attachment to be reciprocal, and thus acquire an additional influence over the queen, his sister,

at the expense of her reputation, he considered it a singularly fortunate incident. Perhaps he expected that it would do even more for him than this: that it would eventually help him to the accomplishment of certain daring views towards the crown itself, of which he was not unsuspected. Whether, however, he was able to trace, in distinct and definite lines, any consequences favourable to himself from the fact which had just come to his knowledge, it is certain he was pleased with the discovery, and considered it as an important acquisition. That he viewed it in this light, indeed, was evident even by his countenance, cautiously guarded as its expressions ever were.

On being satisfied of the fact of Chatelard's attachment to the queen, he withdrew from the door with a look and brief expression of satisfaction, and went directly in quest of the chamberlain. On finding whom—

"So, Mr Chamberlain," he said, "we have got, I find, another animal added to our herd of fawning, drivelling courtiers. Pray, who or what is he, this person who has taken up his quarters in the northern gallery, and by whose authority has he been installed there?"

"By the queen's, my lord," replied the chamberlain. "I have had express and direct orders from the queen herself, to provide the gentleman with apartments in the palace, and to see to his suitable entertainment."

"Ah, indeed," said the earl, biting his lip, and musing for a moment. "By her own express orders!" he repeated. "It is very well." Then, after a pause—"Know ye this favoured person's name, Mr Chamberlain?"

"Chatelard," replied the latter.

"Chatelard! Chatelard!" repeated the earl, mechanically, and again musing; "why, I think I have heard of that gallant before. He is one of those triflers called poets, methinks—a versifier, a scribbler of jingling rhymes. Is it not so?"

"I have heard the queen say so, my lord," replied the chamberlain. "She has spoken of him in my hearing as a poet."

"Ah! the same, the same," said the earl; "but how obtained he access to the queen, know ye?"

"Through his own direct application, my lord. He addressed a poetical epistle to her majesty, I understand, from Goodal's hostelry, where he had taken up his quarters in the first place, requesting permission to wait upon her."

"And it was granted?" interrupted the earl.

"It was, my lord; and he has already had an audience."

"Ah! so!" said the earl, without yet betraying, or having, during any part of this conversation, betrayed, the slightest emotion or symptom of the deep interest he took in the communications which were being made to him. "Know ye," he went on, "if that favour is to be soon again conferred on him? When will he again be admitted to the presence?"

"That, my lord, rests on the queen's pleasure; but I hear say that he is to attend her again this evening in her sitting apartment."

"So, so," said the earl, nodding his head, as he uttered the words. And, turning on his heel, he walked away without further remark.

From the officer with whom he had just been speaking, the Earl of Murray carefully concealed the motives which had prompted his inquiries, but determined, henceforth, to watch with the utmost vigilance the proceedings of the queen and Chatelard, until some circumstance should occur that might put them both fairly within his power. Unaware of the dangerous surveillance under which he was already placed, it was with a delight which only he himself perhaps could feel, that Chatelard received, in the evening, the promised invitation from the queen to attend her and her ladies in their sitting chamber. The invitation was conveyed in some playful verses—an art in which Mary

excelled — written on embossed paper. The enthusiastic poet read the delightful lines a thousand times over, dwelt with rapture on each word and phrase, and finally kissed the precious document with all the eagerness and fervour of a highly-excited and uncontrollable passion. Having indulged in these tender sensibilities for some time, Chatelard at length folded up the unconscious object of his adoration, thrust it into his bosom, took up a small *portfeuille*, covered with red morocco leather, gilt, and embossed, the depository of his poetical effusions, and hurried to the apartment of the queen, where he was speedily set to the task of reading his compositions, for the entertainment of the assembled fair ones; and it is certain that on more than one of them the tender and impassioned manner of the bard, as he recited his really beautiful verses, added to his highly prepossessing appearance and graceful delivery, made an impression by no means favourable to their night's repose. It would, however, perhaps be more tedious than interesting to the reader, were we to detail all that passed on the night in question in the queen's apartment; to record all the witty and pleasant things that were said and done by the queen, her ladies, and her poet. Be it enough to say, that the latter retired at a pretty late hour; his imprudent passion, we cannot say increased—for of increase it would not admit—but strengthened in its wild and ambitious hopes.

From that fatal night, poor Chatelard firmly believed that his love was returned—that he had inspired in the bosom of Mary a passion as ardent as his own. Into this unhappy error the poet's own heated and disturbed imagination had betrayed him, by representing in the light of special marks of favour, occurrences that were merely the emanations of a kind and gentle nature—thus fatally misled by a passion which, if notorious for occasioning groundless fears, is no less so for inspiring unfounded hopes.

Such, at any rate, was its effect in the case of Chatelard on the night in question. On gaining his own chamber, he flung himself into a chair, and spent nearly the whole of the remainder of the night in the indulgence of the wildest and most extravagant dreams of future bliss; for, in the blindness of his passion and tumult of his hopes, he saw no dangers, and feared no difficulties.

From this time forward, Chatelard's conduct to the queen became so marked and unguarded in various particulars, as to excite her alarm, and even to draw down upon the offender some occasional rebukes, although these were at first sufficiently gentle and remote. Nor did the imprudences of the infatuated poet escape the cold, keen eye of Murray. He saw them, and noted them; but took care to wear the semblance of unconsciousness. It was not his business to interrupt, by hinting suspicions, the progress of an affair which he hoped would, on some occasion or other, lead to consequences that he might turn to account. Feeling this, it was not for him to help Chatelard and the queen to elude his vigilance, and defeat his views, by discovering what he observed, and thus putting them on their guard. This was not his business; but it was his business to lie concealed, and to spring out on his quarry the instant that its position invited to the effort. Coldly and sternly, therefore, he watched the motions of Chatelard and his sister; but was little satisfied to perceive nothing in the conduct of the latter regarding the former which at all spoke of the feelings he secretly desired to find. As it was impossible, however, for the earl personally to watch all the movements of Chatelard, he looked around him for some individual of the queen's household whom he might bribe to perform the duties of a spy; and such a one he found amongst the attendants whom Mary had brought with her from France, of which country he was also a native. The name of this ungrateful and despicable wretch, who under-

took to betray a kind and generous mistress, whenever he should discover anything in her conduct to betray, was Choisseul—a man of pleasing manners and address, but of low and vicious habits. Without any certain knowledge of his character, or any previous information regarding him, the Earl of Murray's singular tact and penetration at once singled him out as a likely person for his purposes. On this presumption, he sent for him, and, cautiously and gradually opening him up, found that he had judged correctly of his man.

"Choisseul," he said, on that person being ushered into his presence, "I have good reason to think that you are one in whom I may put trust; and, in this assurance, I have selected you for an especial mark of my confidence. Do you know anything of this Chatelard, who has lately come to court?"

"I do, my lor'. He is countryman of my own."

"So I understand. Well, then, I'll tell you what it is, Choisseul: I believe the fellow has come here for no good—I believe, in short, that he has designs upon the queen. Now, my good fellow, will you undertake to ascertain this for me? Will you watch their proceedings, watch them narrowly, and give me instant information of anything suspicious that may come to your knowledge—and ye shall not miss of your reward?" added the earl, now opening a little desk which stood before him, and taking from it a well-filled purse.

Choisseul, with many bows and grimaces, readily undertook to play the knave, and, with still more, took the price of his knavery, the purse already alluded to, which the earl now handed him.

"Now, Choisseul," said Murray, just before dismissing the miscreant, "I may depend on you?"

"Mine honneur," replied the Frenchman, placing his hand on his breast, with a theatrical air, and bowing to the

ground as he pronounced the words—"Je suis votre serviteur till die."

"Enough," said the earl, waving his hand as a signal to him to retire; "be vigilant and prompt in communicating with me when you have anything of consequence to say."

Choisseul again bowed low, and left the apartment. In the meantime, the gallant, accomplished, but imprudent Chatelard, hurried blindly along by the impetuosity of his passion, and altogether unsettled by the intoxicating belief that his love was returned—a belief which had now taken so fast a hold of his understanding that nothing could loosen it—proceeded from one impropriety to another, till he at length committed one which all but brought matters to a crisis; and this was avoided only by its having escaped the vigilance of Choisseul, and having been compassionately concealed by the queen herself.

On retiring one night, early in February, 1563, to her sleeping apartment, Mary and her attendants were suddenly alarmed by an extraordinary movement in a small closet or wardrobe, in which was kept the clothes the queen was in the habit of daily using. The maids would have screamed out and fled from the apartment, but were checked in both these feminine resorts by observing the calm and collected manner of their mistress, in which there was not the slightest appearance of perturbation.

"Ladies, ladies," she exclaimed, laughingly, as her attendants were about to rush out of the room, "what a pretty pair of heroines ye are! Shame, shame! ye surely would not leave your mistress alone, in the midst of such a perilous adventure as this. Come hither," she added, at the same time stepping towards her toilet, and taking up a small silver lamp that burned on it, "and let us see who this intruder is—whether ghost or gallant."

Saying this—her maids having returned, reassured by her intrepidity—she proceeded, with steady step, towards the

suspected closet, seized the door by the handle, flung it boldly open, and discovered, to the astonished eyes of her attendants, and to her own inexpressible amazement, the poet Chatelard, armed with sword and dagger. For some seconds the queen uttered not a syllable; but a flush of indignation and of insulted pride suffused her exquisitely lovely countenance.

"Chatelard," she at length said, in a tone of calm severity, and with a dignity of manner becoming her high state and lineage, "come forth and answer for this daring and atrocious conduct, this unheard-of insolence and presumption." Chatelard obeyed, and was about to throw himself at her feet, when she sternly forbade him.

"I want no apologies, presumptuous man," she said—"no craving of forgiveness. I want explanation of this infamous proceeding, and that I demand of you in the presence of my attendants here. Know ye not, sir," she went on, "that your head is forfeited by this offence, and that I have but to give the word, and the forfeit will be exacted?"

"I know it, I know it," exclaimed Chatelard, persisting in throwing himself on his knees; "but the threat has no terrors for me. It is your displeasure alone—fairest, brightest of God's creatures—that I fear. It is ——"

"Peace, Chatelard," interrupted Mary, peremptorily. "What mean ye by this language, sir? Would ye cut yourself off from all hope of pardon, by adding offence upon offence? Rise, sir, and leave this apartment instantly, I command you; I will now hear neither explanation nor apology."

"Then, will you forgive me?" said Chatelard; "will you forgive a presumption of which ——"

"I will hear no more, sir," again interrupted the queen, indignantly. "Begone, sir! Remain another instant, and I give the alarm. Your life depends on your obedience."

And Mary placed her hand on a small silver bell, from which had she drawn the slightest sound, the poet's doom was sealed, and she would have rung his funeral knell.

Chatelard now slowly rose from his knees, folded his arms across his breast, and with downcast look, but without uttering another word, strode out of the apartment. When he had gone, the queen, no longer supported by the excitement occasioned by the presence of the intruder, flung herself into a chair, greatly agitated and deadly pale. Here she sat in silence for several minutes, evidently employed in endeavouring to obtain a view of the late singular occurrence in all its bearings, and in determining on the course which she herself ought to pursue regarding it.

Having seemingly satisfied herself on these points—

"Ladies," she at length said—these ladies were two of her Maries, Mary Livingstone and Mary Fleeming—"this is a most extraordinary circumstance. Rash, thoughtless, presumptuous man, how could he have been so utterly lost to every sense of propriety and of his own peril, as to think of an act of such daring insolence?"

"Poor man, I pity him," here simply, but naturally enough, perhaps, interrupted Mary Fleeming. "Doubtless, madam, you will report the matter instantly to the earl?"

"Nay, Mary, I know not if I will, after all," replied the queen. "I perhaps ought to do so; but methinks it would be hardly creditable to me, as a woman, to bring this poor thoughtless young man to the scaffold, whither, you know, my stern brother would have him instantly dragged, if he knew of his offence; and besides, ladies," went on the queen, in whose gentle bosom the kindly feelings of her nature had now completely triumphed over those of insulted dignity and pride, "I know not how far I am myself to blame in this matter. I fear me, I ought to have been more guarded in my conduct towards this infatuated young man. I

should have kept him at a greater distance, and been more cautious of admitting him to familiar converse, since he has evidently misconstrued our affability and condescension. There may have been error there, you see, ladies."

"Yet," said Mary Livingstone, "methinks the daring insolence of the man ought not to go altogether unpunished, madam. If he has chosen to misconstrue, it can be no fault of yours."

"Perhaps not," replied Mary. "As a queen, I certainly ought to give him up to the laws; but as a woman I cannot. Yet shall he not go unpunished. He shall be forthwith banished from our court and kingdom. To-morrow I shall cause it to be intimated to him that he leave our court instantly, and Scotland within four-and-twenty hours thereafter, on pain of our highest displeasure, and peril of disclosure of his crime."

Having thus spoken, and having obtained a promise of secresy regarding Chatelard's offence from her two attendants, Mary retired for the night, not however, quite assured that she was pursuing the right course for her own reputation, in thus screening the guilt of the poet; but nevertheless determined, at all risks, to save him, in this instance at least, from the consequence of his indiscretion. On the following morning, the queen despatched a note to Chatelard, to the purpose which we have represented her as expressing on the preceding night, and, in obedience to the command it contained, he instantly left the palace, but in a state of indescribable mental agitation and distraction; for in the determination expressed by the queen he saw at once an end to all his wild hopes, and more unendurable still, an assurance that he had wholly mistaken the feelings with which Mary regarded him. We have said that Chatelard obeyed one of the injunctions of the queen—that was, to leave the palace instantly. He did so; but whether he conformed to the other the sequel will show.

Two days after the occurrences just related, Mary set out for St. Andrew's; taking the route of the Queensferry, and sleeping the first night at Dunfermline, and the second at Burntisland. On the evening of her arrival at the latter place, the queen, fatigued by her journey, which had been prolonged by hunting and hawking, retired early to her apartment. Here she had not been many minutes, when the door was thrown suddenly open, and Chatelard entered.

"What! again, Chatelard!" exclaimed Mary, with the utmost indignation and astonishment. "What means this, sir? How have you dared to intrude yourself again into my apartment?"

Without making any reply to this salutation, Chatelard threw himself on his knees before the queen, and, seizing the skirt of her robe, implored her pardon for his presumption; adding, that he had been impelled to this second intrusion solely by a desire to explain to her the motives of his former conduct, which, he said, had been wrongly interpreted, and to bid her farewell before he went into the banishment to which she had doomed him.

"Rise, sir, rise," said Mary; "I will listen to no explanations forced on me in this extraordinary manner. I desire that you instantly quit this apartment. This repetition of your offence, sir, I will neither bear with nor overlook. Rise, I command you, and begone!"

Instead of obeying, the infatuated poet not only persisted in remaining in the position he was in, but, still keeping hold of the queen's robe, began to speak the language of passion and love. The queen endeavoured to release herself from his hold, and was in the act of attempting to do so, when the door of the apartment, which Chatelard had closed behind him, was violently thrown open, and the Earl of Murray entered. Having advanced two or three steps, he stood still, and, folding his arms across his breast, looked

sternly, but in silence, first at the queen, and then at Chatelard; keeping, at the same time, sufficiently near the door to prevent the escape of the latter, in case he should make such an attempt. Having gazed on them for some time without opening his lips, but with an ominous expression of countenance—

"Well, Sir Poet," he at length said, addressing Chatelard, with cold deliberation, "pray do me the favour to enlighten me as to the meaning of your having thus intruded yourself into the queen's apartment. Why do I find you here, sir, and wherefore have I found you in the position from which you have just now risen? Pray, sir, explain."

"I came here, my lord," replied Chatelard, with firmness and dignity, "to take leave of Her Majesty before returning to France, for which I set out to-morrow."

An ironical and incredulous smile played on the stern countenance of Murray. "A strange place this, methinks, and a strange season, for leave-taking; and yet stranger than all the language in which I just now heard you speak. You are aware, I presume, sir," he added, "that you are just now in the queen's sleeping apartment, where none dare intrude but on the peril of their lives. But probably, madam," he said, now turning to the queen, without waiting any reply to his last remark, "you can explain the meaning of this extraordinary scene."

"You had better, my lord," replied Mary, evasively—for she was still reluctant to commit the unfortunate poet—"obtain what explanations you desire from Chatelard himself. He surely is the fittest person to explain his own conduct."

"True, madam," said Murray, sneeringly, "but I thought it not by any means improbable that you might be as well informed on the point in question as the gentleman himself."

"Your insinuation is rude, my lord," replied the queen,

haughtily; and, without vouchsafing any other remark, walked away to the further end of the apartment, leaving the earl and Chatelard together.

Murray now saw, from the perfectly composed and independent manner of the queen, that he could make out nothing to her prejudice from the case before him, nor elicit the slightest evidence of anything like connivance, on the part of Mary, at Chatelard's intrusion. Seeing this, he determined on proceeding against the unfortunate poet with the utmost rigour to which his imprudence had exposed him, in the hope that severity would wring from him such confessions as would implicate the queen.

Having come to this resolution—"Sir," he said, addressing Chatelard, "prepare to abide the consequences of your presumption." And he proceeded to the door, called an attendant, and desired him to send the captain of the guard and a party to him instantly.

In a few minutes, they appeared, when the earl, addressing the officer just named, and pointing to Chatelard, desired him to put that gentleman in ward; and the latter was immediately hurried out of the apartment. When the guard, with their prisoner, had left the queen's chamber, the earl walked up to Mary, who, with her head leaning pensively on her hand, had been silently contemplating the proceedings that were going forward in her apartment.

"Madam," said Murray, on approaching her, "I think you may consider yourself in safety for this night, at any rate, from any further intrusion from this itinerant versifier; and it shall be my fault if he ever again annoys you or any one else."

"What, brother!" exclaimed Mary, in evident alarm at this ambiguous, but ominous hint—"you will not surely proceed to extremities against the unfortunate young man?"

"By St Bride, but I will though," replied Murray, angrily.

"Why, madam, has not your reputation as a woman, and your dignity as a queen, both been assailed by this insolent foreigner, in the daring act he has done?"

"Nay, my lord,' replied the queen, haughtily, "methinks it will take much more than this to affect my reputation. I indeed marvel much to hear you speak thus, my lord. My dignity, again, can be debased only by mine own acts, and cannot be affected by the act of another."

"Nevertheless, madam," rejoined her brother, "ye cannot stop slanderous tongues; and I know not how the world may construe this circumstance. Both your honour and station require that this presumtuous knave suffer the penalty of his crime in its utmost rigour. What would the world say else? Why, it would have suspicions that ought not for an instant to be associated with the name of Mary Stuart."

"But you will not have his life taken, brother?" said Mary, in a gentle tone—subdued by the thoughts of the severe doom that threatened the unfortunate gentleman, and placing her hand affectionately on the earl's arm as she spoke. "Can ye not banish him forth of the realm, or imprison him—anything short of death, which, methinks, would be, after all, hard measure for the offence?"

"You have reasons, doubtless, madam," said the earl, coldly and bluntly, "for this tenderness."

"I have," said Mary, indignantly; "but not, my lord, such as you would seem to insinuate. My reasons are, humanity and a feeling of compassion for the misguided and unhappy youth."

"Chatelard shall have such mercy, madam, as your Majesty's Privy Council may deem him deserving of," replied the earl, turning round on his heel, and quitting the apartment.

On leaving the presence of the queen, the Earl of Murray retired to his own chamber where he was, shortly after,

waited upon by Choisseul, who had been for some time watching his return.

"Ha, Choisseul! art there?" said the earl, with an unusual expression of satisfaction on his countenance, on the former's entrance. "Thou hast done well, friend; I found matters exactly as you stated, and am obliged by the promptness and accuracy of your information."

"Vere happy, my lor', I am serve to your satisfaction," replied Choisseul, bowing low. "I vas vatch Monsieur Chatelard as vone cat shall vatch vone leetle mice, and did caught him at las."

"You did well, Choisseul, and shall be suitably recompensed. Dost know how the fellow came here, and when?"

"He did come in vone leetle barque, my lor' from over de riviere, on de todder side opposite."

"Ah, so!" said the earl. "Well, you may now retire, Choisseul. To-morrow I shall see to your reward."

Choisseul bowed, and withdrew.

When he had retired, the earl sat down to a small writing table, and, late as the hour was, began writing with great assiduity—an employment at which he continued until he had written eight or ten different letters, each of considerable length. These were addressed to various members of the Queen's Privy Council in Edinburgh, and to some of the law officers of the crown. They were all nearly copies of each other, and contained an account of Chatelard's conduct, with a charge to the several parties addressed to repair to St. Andrews on the second day following, for the purpose of holding a court on the offender, and awarding him such punishment as the case might seem to demand.

On the day succeeding that on which the occurrence just related took place, the queen and her retinue proceeded to St. Andrews, whither the prisoner Chatelard was also carried; and, on the next again, the unfortunate gentleman was brought to trial, the scene of which was an apartment

in the Castle of St Andrews, which had been hastily prepared for the occasion. In the centre of this apartment was placed a large oblong oaken table, covered with crimson velvet, and surrounded by a circle of high-backed chairs, with cushions covered with the same material. These were subsequently occupied by eight or ten persons of the Privy Council, including Mary's secretary of state, Maitland of Lethington, who sat at one end of the table. At the opposite end sat the Earl of Murray; the prisoner occupying a place in the centre at one of the sides. During the investigation which followed into the offence of Chatelard, the Earl of Murray made repeated indirect attempts to lead him to make statements prejudicial to the queen; urging him, with a show of candour and pretended regard for justice, to inform the court of anything and everything which he thought might be available in his defence, without regard to the rank or condition of those whom such statements might implicate. This language was too plain to be misunderstood. Every one present perceived that it conveyed a pointed allusion to the queen. Chatelard, amongst the rest, felt that it did so, and indignantly repelled the insinuation.

"I have none," he said, "to accuse but myself; nothing to blame but my own folly. Folly, did I say?" went on the fearless enthusiast; "it was no folly—it was love, love, love—all-powerful love—love for her, the noblest, the loveliest of created beings, for whom I could die ten thousand deaths. It was love for her who has been to me the breath of life, the light of mine eyes, the idol of my heart; around which were entwined all the feelings and susceptibilities of my nature, even as the ivy entwines the tree—the constant theme of my dreams by night; the sole subject of my thoughts by day. It has been hinted to me that I may blame freely, where to blame may serve me. But whom shall I blame? Not her, surely, who is the object of my

idolatry—my sun, moon, and stars—my heaven, my soul, my existence. Not her, surely; for she is faultless as the unborn babe, pure and spotless as the snow-wreath in the hollow of the mountain. Who shall maintain the contrary lies in his throat, and is a foul-mouthed, villanous slanderer."

Here the enthusiastic and somewhat incoherent speaker was abruptly interrupted by Maitland of Lethington, who, rising to his feet, and resting his hands on the low table around which Chatelard's judges were seated, said, looking at the prisoner—

"Friend, ye must speak to your defence, if ye would speak at all. This that you have said is nothing to the purpose; and you cannot be permitted to take up the time of this court with such rhapsodies as these, that make not for any point of your accusation. Think ye not so, my lords?" he added, glancing around the table.

Several nods of assent spoke acquiescence. When Maitland had concluded—

"I have done, then, my lords," said Chatelard, bowing, and seating himself. "I have no more to say."

A short conversation now took place amongst the prisoner's judges, when sentence of death was unanimously agreed to, and he was ordered to be beheaded on the following day, the 22d of February, 1563.

On the rising of the court, the Earl of Murray repaired to the queen, and informed her of the doom awarded against Chatelard. Mary was greatly affected by the intelligence. She burst into tears, exclaiming—

"Oh, unhappy, thrice unhappy, countenance! thou hast been given me for a curse, instead of a blessing—the ruin of those who love me best—that, by inspiring a silly passion, at once dangerous and worthless, will not permit one to remain near me in the character of friend! My lord, my lord," she continued, in great agitation, "can you not,

will you not save the unhappy young man? I beseech thee, I implore thee, by the ties of consanguinity that connect us, by the duty ye owe to me as thy sovereign, to spare his life!"

"You know not what you ask, madam," replied Murray, stalking up and down the apartment. "How can his life be spared consistently with your honour? Save him, and you will set a thousand slanderous tongues a-wagging. It may not, must not, be."

Mary herself could not deny the force of this remark, and, finding she had nothing to oppose to it, she flung herself into a chair, and again burst into tears. In this condition the earl left her, to give orders respecting the execution of Chatelard on the following day, and to put another proceeding in train for obtaining that result which he had aimed at on the trial of the unfortunate young man. Sending again for Choisseul—

"Friend," he said, on that person's entering the apartment, "I wish another small piece of service at your hands."

Choisseul bowed, and expressed his readiness to do anything he might be required to do.

"I vas proud to discharge all de drops of my blood in your service, my lor'," said the knave, with a profound obeisance.

The earl carelessly nodded approbation.

"To-night, then, Choisseul," he went on, "you will repair to the dungeon in which Chatelard is confined. You will see him as a friend. You understand me?"

"Ah, well, my lor', vere well."

"Just so. Well, then, you will hint to him that you have reason to believe he might yet save his life by confessing a participation in his guilt on the part of the queen. You may add, though not as from me, of course, that I have no doubt of his having been encouraged to those

liberties for which his life is forfeited; and you may say that you know I feel for him, and would readily procure his pardon, if he would only give me a reasonable ground or pretext for doing so, by showing that there were *others* equally in fault with him. Do you entirely understand me, Choisseul?"

"Entirely, my lor'," replied the latter; "bright, clear, as noonday at the sun."

"So, then, return to me when you have seen Chatelard, and let me know the result," said the earl.

Choisseul once more withdrew, to perform the treacherous and knavish part assigned him. About midnight he sought the dungeon of the unhappy gentleman, and, having been admitted by the guards, found him busily employed in writing; the indulgence of a lamp, with pen, ink, and paper, having, at his most earnest request, been afforded him. Indeed, these were more readily and willingly given than he was aware of. They were given in the hope that he would commit something to writing which, without his intending it, might compromise the character of the queen. But in this her enemies were disappointed.

On Choisseul's entering Chatelard's dungeon, the latter, as we have already said, was busily engaged in writing. He was inditing a last farewell to the queen in verse. On this employment he was so intent, that he did not observe, or at least pay any attention to, the entrance of Choisseul, but continued writing on till he had completed his task, which now, however, occupied only a very few minutes. On finishing—

"'Tis done," he said, and threw down his pen with violence on the table. "These are the last notes of the harp of Chatelard. Ha, Choisseul!" he immediately added, and only now for the first time seeming conscious of that person's presence; "I am glad to see you, my countryman. This is kind. I thought there were none in this strange

land to care for me. But they shall see, Choisseul," he added, proudly, "how a Frenchman and a poet can die. That is, boldly and bravely. He were no true poet whose soul was not elevated above the fear of death. I said, my friend," he went on, after a momentary pause, and sighing deeply as he spoke, "that I thought there were none in this land to care for me, or to sorrow for me—and perhaps it is so; but there is one, Choisseul, whom I would not willingly believe indifferent to my fate. She surely, much as I have offended her, will say, 'Poor Chatelard!' Nay, methinks I see a tear standing in that peerless eye, when she recalls the memory of her departed poet. That—that, Choisseul," said the unhappy captive, with an enthusiasm which even the near approach of death had not been able to abate—"that would be something worth dying for!"

Choisseul smiled.

"You hold your life lightly, indeed, Chatelard," he said, speaking in his native language, "if you think its loss compensated by a woman's tear."

"Ah, Choisseul, but such a woman!" exclaimed Chatelard.

"Well, well," replied the former, again smiling; "but you can have no doubt that *she* at least will regret your death. *She* loved you too well not to deplore your fate."

"Did she?" exclaimed Chatelard, eagerly, and with such a look of inquiry and doubt as greatly disappointed the asserter. "You know who I mean, then; but how know ye that which you have just now said? Assure me that ye speak true, Choisseul, and I shall die happy."

"Ah, bah! you know it yourself, my friend, better than I," replied the latter. "No use in concealing it now," he added, with an intelligent look.

"Concealing what, sir?" said Chatelard, in a tone of mingled surprise and displeasure.

"Why, the affection the queen entertained for you," re-

plied Choisseul. "We all know, my friend, you would not have done what you did, had she not encouraged your addresses. And I'll tell you what, Chatelard," he went on, "I have reason to believe that your life would yet be spared, f you would only show that this was so."

"Ah, I understand you," said Chatelard, with suppressed passion. "If I will accuse the queen—if I will put her in the power of her enemies—her enemies will be obliged to me. In other words, I may save my life by sacrificing her reputation; and it would be little matter whether what I said should be true or not. Is it not so, Choisseul?" Then, without waiting for an answer—"Villain, devil that thou art," he exclaimed, now suddenly giving full swing to the passion that had been raised within him, "how hast thou dared to come to me with such an infamous proposal as this? Didst think, most dastardly knave, that my soul was as mean as thine own? Begone, begone, ruffian! Thy presence, thy breath, pollutes my dungeon more than the fetid damps that exhale from its walls—more than the noxious reptiles that crawl on its floor. Begone! begone, I say!" And he seized the now trembling caitiff by the throat, and dashed him against the door of the cell, with a violence that instantly brought in the guards who were stationed on the outside. These, seeing how matters stood, hurried Choisseul out of the dungeon, and again secured the door on its unfortunate inmate.

On leaving Chatelard, Choisseul repaired to the Earl of Murray, but with infinitely less confidence in his looks and manner than on the former occasion when his villany had been successful. To the earl he detailed the particulars of his interview with Chatelard; not forgetting to mention the rough treatment he had received from the infuriated poet.

"Then he'll confess nothing, Choisseul?" said Murray, when the former had done speaking.

"Not anything at all, my lor'. Dere is no hope; for he make no more of dying than I do of taking vone leetle pinch of snuff."

"Obstinate fool," exclaimed the earl, evidently chagrined and disappointed. "Let him die, then! You may retire, Choisseul," he abruptly added.

Choisseul obeyed.

"His execution, at any rate, shall be public," said the earl to himself, when the latter had left him. "Perhaps he may make some confession on the scaffold, and it will be well to have it amply testified."

On the following day, Chatelard was led out to execution, when his gentleman-like appearance and noble bearing excited the utmost sympathy of the crowd. On ascending the scaffold, he pulled a small volume from his pocket, opened it, and read aloud, with great dignity and composure, Ronsard's Hymn on Death. When he had done, he turned towards that part of the Castle of St Andrew's where he supposed the queen to be, and, kissing his hand, waved a graceful adieu, exclaiming—"Farewell, loveliest and most cruel princess whom the world contains!"

Having uttered these words, he laid his head, with the utmost composure, on the block. The axe of the executioner fell, and the high-souled, accomplished, but enthusiastic Chatelard was no more.

CHRISTIE OF THE CLEEK.

Though the records of history and everyday experience teach us that human nature, when pressed beyond certain limits by the force of stern necessity, loses all trace of the lineaments of the lord of the creation, and degenerates as far below the grade of brute existence as it is, when not subjected to any such power, above it; yet it is remarkable how determinedly mankind cling to a sceptical incredulity in regard to those facts which derogate, in a very great degree, from the dignity of the character of their species. The story of Christiecleek has been considered by many as only fit for being, what it has been for five hundred years, a nursery bugbear, and yet it is narrated by Winton, one of the least credulous of historians, was attended by circumstances rendering it highly probable at the time, and has been corroborated by instances of *civilised* cannabalism, produced by necessity, in cases of shipwreck, of almost yearly occurrence.

The united powers of war and famine, which have so often poured forth their fury on the devoted head of poor Scotland, at no time exhibited greater malignity than in the beginning of the reign of David II. For about fifty years, the country had scarcely ever enjoyed a year of quiet—with, perhaps, the exception of a short period of the reign of Bruce. Repeatedly swept from one end to the other by the invading armies of the Edwards, carrying the sword and the faggot in every direction, she was, on the very instant of the departure of the foreign foes (in all cases starved out of a burned and devastated land), laid hold of by the harpies of intestine wars. The strong resilient energies of the country

could have thrown off the effects of one attack, however severe and however protracted; but a series of incursions of the same disease, at intervals allowing of no time for recruiting her powers, produced a political marasmus—a confirmed famine—one of the most dreadful evils, including in itself all others, that ever was visited on mankind.

It would be difficult to draw a picture—because imagination falls short of the powers of a proper portraiture—of the misery and desolation of Scotland at the time we have mentioned. The land had got gradually out of cultivation, and the herds of black cattle and sheep, on which the people relied, in default of the productive powers of agriculture, had been either driven into England, or consumed by the myriads of soldiers of the English invading armies. Great numbers of the people, having nothing wherewith to allay the pangs of hunger, though they had plenty of money, quitted their country in despair, and took refuge in Flanders. Those who had no money to pay their passage, left their homes, and betook themselves to the woods, where, to appease their agonies, they lay on the ground, and devoured, like the inhabitants of their sties, the acorns and the nuts that had fallen from the trees. In the want of these, the very branches were laid hold of and gnawed; and many poor creatures were found lying dead, with the half-masticated boughs in their clenched hands. The only remedial influence that was experienced, was the growth of dysenteries and other intestine diseases, which, produced by hunger and becoming epidemic, kindly swept off thousands who would otherwise have died of protracted famine.

At a wild spot near the Grampian Hills, a number of destitute beings had collected, for the purpose of catching deer (a few of which still remained), to keep in the spark of life. They agreed to associate together, and divide their prey, which was dressed in a mountain cave, where they had assembled. Every morning they sallied forth, women and all,

on the dreadful errand of taking advantage of chance, in supplying them with any species of wild animals that came in their way, to satisfy the imperative demands of hunger. They got a few creatures at first, consisting chiefly of hares and foxes, and occasionally wolves, as ferocious and hungry as their captors; and such was the extremity to which they were often reduced, that they sat down on the spot where the animals were caught, divided the smoking limbs among their number, and devoured them without any culinary preparation.

This supply very soon ceased—the animals in the neighbourhood having either been consumed or frightened away to more inaccessible places. The wretched beings, like others in their situation, had recourse to the woods for acorns; but the time of the year had passed, and no nuts were to be found. Weakness preyed on their limbs; and several of their number, unable longer to go in search of food, which was nowhere to be found, lay on the floor of the cavern in the agonies of a hunger which their stronger companions, concerned for their own fate, would not alleviate. All ties between the members of the association began to give way before the despair of absolute famine. They ceased all personal communication; silence, feeding on the morbid forms of misery called up by diseased imaginations, reigned throughout the society of skeletons, and hollow eyes, which spoke unutterable things, glanced through the gloom of the cavern, where a glimmering fire, on which they had, for a time, prepared the little meat they had procured, was still kept up, by adding a few pieces of wood from the neighbouring forest. No notice was taken of each other's agonies, nor could the groans which mixed and sounded with a hollow noise through the dark recess, have been distinguished by the ear of sympathy: an occasional scream from a female sufferer who experienced a paroxysm of more than her ordinary agony, was only cap-

able of fixing the attention for an instant, till individual pain laid hold again of the tortured feelings

A person of the name of Andrew Christie, a butcher, originally from Perth, had endeavoured, at first, to organise the society, with a view to save himself and his fellow-sufferers. He was a strong, hardy man; and, if any of the number could be said to retain a small portion of self-command, in the midst of the horrible scene of suffering which surrounded them, it was this man. He was still able to walk, though with difficulty, and continued to feed the fire, going out occasionally and seizing on grubs that were to be found about the mouth of the cavern. The others were unable to follow his example, and even he latterly was unfitted for his loathsome search. All were now nearly in the same predicament: agony and despair reigned throughout, to the exclusion of a single beam of hope of any one ever again visiting the haunts of man. At Christie's side a woman ceased to groan; an intermission of agony was a circumstance, and the only circumstance to be remarked. The thought struck him she was dead; he laid his hand upon her mouth to be assured of the fact; she was no more! The dead body was a talisman in the temple of misery—in a short time, that body was gone!

The Rubicon of the strongest of natural prejudices was passed, with the goading furies of hunger and despair behind. A prejudice overcome is an acquisition of liberty, though it may be for evil. The death of the woman had saved them all from death; but the efficacy of the salvation would postpone a similar course of relief. Christie saw the predicament of his friends, and proposed in the hollow, husky voice of starvation, that one of their number should die by lot, and that then, having recovered strength, they should proceed to the mountain pass and procure victims.

This oration was received with *groans*, meant to be of applause. The lot of death fell on another woman, who

was sacrificed to the prevailing demon. A consequent recovery of strength now fitted the survivors for their dreadful task. They proceeded to the mountain pass, headed by Christie, and killed a traveller, by knocking him on the head with a hammer, and then removed him to the cavern, where his body was treated in the same manner as that of the woman on whom the lot of death had fallen. They repeated this operation whenever their hunger returned; making no selection of their victims, unless when there was a choice between a foot-passenger and a horseman—the latter of whom, always preferred for the sake of his horse, was dragged from his seat with a large iron hook, fixed to the end of a pole—an invention of Christie's, serving afterwards to give him the dreadful name by which he became so well known. That which hunger at first suggested became afterwards a matter of choice, if not of fiendish delight. The silent process of assuaging the pain arising from want subsequently changed into a banquet of cannibals; the song of rivalry was sounded in dithyrambic measure over the dead body of the victim, and the corrybantic dance of the wretches who required to still conscience by noise, or die, was footed to the wild music which, escaping from the cavern, rung among the hills. Such were the obsequies which Scotchmen, resigning the nature of man, amidst unheard-of agonies, celebrated over the corpses of their countrymen.

These things reached the ears of government; and an armed force was despatched to the hills to seize the cannibals. Several of them were caught; but Christie and some others escaped, and were never captured. The bones of their victims were collected and conveyed to Perth; where, upon being counted, it appeared that they had killed no fewer than thirty travellers. From these transactions sprung that name, Christiecleek, which is so familiar to the ears of Scotchmen. "Christiecleek! Christiecleek!" became instantly the national nursery bugbear. No child would cry

after the charmed name escaped from the lips of the nurse; and even old people shuddered at the mention of a term which produced ideas so revolting to human nature, and so derogatory of Scottish character.

Now it is said that, some time after the performance of the dreadful tragedy we have narrated, an old man in the town of Dumfries, who had three children by his wife, quarrelled her often for the use of a term intended simply to pacify her children when they cried, but which he declared was too much even for his ears. He was a respectable merchant, had earned a considerable sum of money by his trade, and was reputed a most godly man, attending divine service regularly, and performing all the domestic duties with order and great suavity of manner. His neighbours looked up to him with love and respect, and solicited his counsel in their difficulties. His name—David Maxwell—was applauded in the neighbourhood, and he received great sympathy from all who knew him, in consequence of having, as was reported, lost an only brother among Christiecleek's victims—a fact he had concealed from his wife, till her use of the name compelled him to mention it to her, but which afterwards came to be well known.

The silence of the mother had, however, no effect upon the urchins, who, the more they were requested to cease terrifying each other by their national *terriculamentum*, "Christiecleek," the more terrible it appeared to them, and the more they used it. If they abstained from the use of the word in the presence of their parents, they were the more ready to have recourse to it in the passages of the house, and in the dark rooms, and wherever the dreaded being might be supposed to be. The pastime was general throughout Scotland; and David Maxwell's children only followed an example which has been repeated for five hundred years. "Christiecleek!—Christiecleek!" What Scotchman has not heard the dreaded words? Time rolled on, and

the Misses Maxwell resigned their childish pastime for the duties of women. Their father had become a very old man; and the attentions which their mother could not bestow, were willingly yielded by the young women, who were remarked as being very beautiful, as well as very good. They loved their father dearly, and looked upon their filial duties as willing tributes of affection. After they became intrusted with the secret, they substituted for the cry of their youth, which had given their father so much pain, pity for the brother of the victim of the execrated fiend.

At last David Maxwell came to die; and, as he lay on his bed, surrounded by his wife and daughters, he seemed to be wrestling with some dreadful thought which allowed him no rest, but wrung from him, incessantly, heavy groans and muttered prayers. His wife pressed him to open his heart to her, or, if he was disinclined to repose that confidence in her when dying, which he had awarded to her so liberally during a long union, he should, she recommended, send for Father John of the Monastery of St Agnes, and be shrived. The daughters wept as they heard these melancholy statements, and the old man sympathised in their sorrow, which seemed to give him additional pain. At last he seemed inclined to be communicative, and, after a struggle, said to his wife—

"Wha is to tak care o' my dochters when I am consigned to that cauld habitation whar a faither's love and an enemy's anger are alike unfelt and unknown? My effects will be sufficient for the support o' my household; but money, without a guardian, is only a temptation to destroyers and deceivers. If I could get this point settled to my satisfaction, I micht die in peace."

"You never tauld me o' yer freens, David," said his wife —"a circumstance that has often grieved me. The hundreds o' Maxwells in the Stewartry and in Dumfries-shire surely contain among them some relation, however distant; but my

uncle will act as guardian to our dochters, and ye hae tried his honesty."

"Yet I dinna want relations," groaned the dying man. "I hae a *brither*."

"A brither," ejaculated the mother and daughter in astonishment; "was he no killed by the monster, Christiecleek, in the Highland cavern?"

"No," answered David, with great pain."

"Whar lives he, and what's his Christian name?" cried the wife, in amazement.

"Is it his *Christian* name ye ask?" said the old man.

"Surely David," replied the wife—"his surname maun be Maxwell."

"But it is not Maxwell," said he, still groaning.

"Not Maxwell!" said the wife. "What is it then?"

"*Christie!*" ejaculated David, with a groan.

The mention of this name produced a strange effect on the minds of the wife and daughters, who, in the brother, saw (as they thought) at once the hated Christiecleek, and found an explanation of the horror which David Maxwell had uniformly exhibited when the name was mentioned in his presence. They had at last discovered the true solution of what had appeared so wonderful; and, having retired for a few minutes, to allow their excitement to subside, they, by comparing notes, came to the conclusion that their father, having been ashamed of his connection with the unnatural being, had changed his name, and dropped all intercourse with him; but that now, when he was about to die, his feelings had overpowered him, and forced him to make the awful confession he had uttered. Pained and shamed by this newly-discovered connection, they were not regardless of what was due to him whose shame and grief had been even greater than theirs, and, accordingly, resolved to yield all the consolation in their power to the good man who could not help

having a bad brother. On their return to the bedside, they found him in great agony both of mind and body.

"This brither, David," said the wife, "I fear, is little worthy o' your friendship, and the change o' your name is, doubtless, the consequence o' a virtuous shame o' the connection. But can it be possible that he is that man o' the mountain cavern, whose name terrifies the bairns o' Scotland, and maks even the witches o' the glens raise their bony hands in wonder and execration? Tell us, David, freely, if this be the burden which presses sae heavily on yer mind. Yer wife and dochters will think nae less o' you for having been unfortunate; and consolation is never sae usefu as when it is applied to a grief that is nae langer secret. The surgeon's skill is o' little avail when the disease is unknown."

This speech, containing apparently the fatal secret, produced a great effect upon the bedridden patient, who rolled from side to side, and sawed the air with his sinewy hands, like one in a state of madness.

"We were speakin o' guardians for my dochters," said he, at last, "and I said I had a brither whase surname is Christie. You promised me consolation. Is this your comfort to a deein man? For twenty years I have hated the mention o' that dreadfu name; and now, when I am on my death-bed, speakin o' curators for my bairns, ye rack my ears by tellin me I am the brither o' *Christiecleek!* Would Christiecleek be a suitable guardian for my dochters? Speak, Agnes—say if ye think Christiecleek would tak care o' their bodies and their gowd as weel as he tended the victims o' the Highland cave?"

The wife saw she had gone too far, and begged his pardon for having made the suggestion.

"Ye will forgive me, David," said she, "for the remark. I hae dune ye great injustice; for how is it possible to conceive that sae guid a man could be sae nearly related to a

monster? But ye hae to explain to me the change o' name. How hae you and your brither different surnames?"

"*Because*," said the dying man, turning round, and staring with lacklustre eyes broadly in the face of his wife—"*because I am Christiecleek!*"

END OF VOL. IX.

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WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE FIRST-FOOT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the shortness of their days, the bitterness of their frosts, and the fury of their storms, December and January are merry months. First comes old Christmas, shaking his hoary locks, belike, in the shape of snow-drift, and laughing, well-pleased, beneath his crown of mistletoe, over the smoking sirloin and the savoury goose. There is not a child on the south side of the Borders who longs not for the coming of merry Christmas: it is their holiday of holidays, their season of play and of presents; and old and young shake hands with Christmas, and with each other. And even on the northern side of "the river," and "the ideal line by fancy drawn," which "divide the sister kingdoms," there are thousands who welcome and forget not "blithe Yule Day." Next comes the New Year—the bottle, the hot pint, and the *first-foot*—and we might notice, also, Hansel Monday, and "Auld Hansel Monanday," which follow in their wake, and keep up the merriment till the back of January is broken. But our business at present is with the *first-foot*, and we must hold. It matters not on what side of the Borders it may be—and northward the feeling extends far beyond the Borders—there is a mysterious, an ominous importance attached to the individual who first crosses the threshold, after the clock has struck twelve at midnight, on the 31st of December, or who is the *first-foot*

in a house after the New Year has begun. The *first-foot* stamps the "luck" of the house—the good fortune or the evil fortune of its inmates throughout the year! But to begin with our story. There was not a person on all the Borders, nor yet in all Scotland, who attached more importance to the first-foot than Nelly Rogers. Nelly was a very worthy, kindhearted, yea, even sensible sort of woman; but a vein of superstition ran through her sense: she had imbibed a variety of "auld-warld notions" in infancy, and, as she grew up, they became a part of her creed. She did not exactly believe that ghosts and apparitions existed in her day, but she was perfectly sure they *had* existed, and *had* been seen; she was sure, also, there was something in dreams, and she was positive there was a great deal in the luckiness or unluckiness of a first-foot; she had remarked it in her own experience thirty times, and, she said, "it was o' nae use attempting to argue her out o' what she had observed hersel." Nelly was the wife of one Richard Rogers, a respectable farmer, whose farmhouse stood by the side of the post-road between Kelso and Lauder. They had a family of several children; but our business is with the eldest, who was called George, and who had the misfortune to receive, both from his parents and their neighbours, the character of being *a genius*. This is a very unfortunate character to give to any one who has a fortune to make in the world, as will be seen when we come to notice the history of George the Genius—for such was the appellation by which he was familiarly mentioned. Now, it was the last night of the old year—George was about twelve years of age, and, because he was their first-born, and, moreover, because he was a genius, he was permitted to sit with his father and his mother, and a few friends, who had come to visit them, to see the old year out, and the New Year in. The cuckoo clock struck twelve, and the company rose, shook hands, wished each other a happy new year, and, in a bumper,

drank, "May the year that's awa be the warst o' our lives."

"I wonder wha will be our first-foot," said Nelly; "I hope it will be a lucky ane."

The company began to argue whether there was anything in the luck of a first-foot or not, and the young genius sided with his mother; and, while they yet disputed upon the subject, a knocking was heard at the front-door.

"There's somebody," said Nelly; "if it's onybody that I think's no luck, I winna let them in."

"Nonsense!" said Richard.

"It's nae nonsense," replied Nelly; "it may be a *flat-soled* body, for onything I ken; and do ye think I wad risk the like o' that. Haud awa, see wha it is, George," added she, addressing the genius; "and dinna let them in unless you're sure that they dinna come empty-handed."

"Did ever ye hear the like o' the woman?" said her husband. "Sic havers! Rin awa, George, hinny; open the door."

The boy ran to the door, and inquired—"Who's there?"

"A stranger," was the reply.

"What do ye want?" inquired the genius, with a degree of caution seldom found in persons honoured with such an epithet.

"I have a letter to Master Rogers, from his brother," answered the stranger.

"A letter frae my brother John!" cried Richard, starting from his seat; "open the door, laddie—open the door."

Now, Richard Rogers had a brother, who also had been considered a sort of a genius in his youth. He was of a wild and restless disposition in those days, and his acquaintances were wont to call him by the name of Jack the Rambler. But it is a long road that has no turning—he had now been many years at sea—was the captain of a free-trader—and as remarkable for his steadiness and worldly wisdom, as he

had been noted for the wildness of his youth. There was a mysterious spot in the captain's history, which even his brother Richard had never been able to clear up. But that spot will be brought to light by and by.

George opened the door, and the stranger entered. He was dressed as a seaman; and Nelly drew back and appeared troubled as her eyes fell upon him. It was evident she had set him down in her mind as an unlucky first-foot. He was not, indeed, the most comely personage that one might desire to look upon on a New-year's morning; for he was a squat little fellow, with huge red whiskers that almost buried his face; his burly head was covered with a sou'wester, and his eyes squinted most fearfully. Nelly could not withdraw her eyes from the man's eyes—she contemplated the squint with horror! Such eyes were never in the head of a first-foot before! She was sure that "something no canny would be the upshot."

"Tak a seat, sir—tak a seat, sir," said Richard, addressing the sailor; "fill out a glass, and mak yoursel at hame. Nelly, bring a clean tumbler. And ye hae a letter frae my brother, the captain, sir," added he, anxiously; "how is he?—where is he?—when did ye see him?"

"I left him at Liverpool, sir," replied the queer-looking sailor; "and, as I intended to take a run down over and to Leith to see my old mother, 'Bill,' says he to me (for my name's Bill, sir—Bill Somers)—well, as I'm saying, 'Bill,' says he, 'you'll be going past the door of a brother of mine, and I wish I were going with you'—(and I wish he had, for, not to say it before you, sir, there an't a better or a cleverer fellow than Captain Rogers in the whole service—nor a luckier one either, though, poor fellow, he has had his bad luck too in some things; and it sticks to him still, and will stick to him)—however, as I say, said he to me—'Bill, here is a bit of a letter, give it to my brother—it concerns my nevy, George'—(yes, George, I think he called him). So

I took the letter and set off—that is some days ago—and I arrived at the public-house, a little from this, about four hours since, and intended to cast anchor there for the night; but having taken a glass or two, by way of ballast, I found myself in good sailing trim, and, having inquired about you, and finding that you lived but a short way off, and that the people in the house said, it being New-year's times, you wouldn't be moored yet, I desired the landlady to fill me up half-a-gallon or so of her best rum, that I mightn't come empty-handed—for that wouldn't be lucky, ma'am, I reckon," added he, squinting in the face of Mrs Rogers, who looked now at his eyes, and now at a large bottle, which he drew from beneath a sort of half greatcoat or monkey-jacket. Nelly was no friend to spirit-drinking; nevertheless she was glad that her first-foot, though he did squint, had not come empty-handed.

The letter was handed to Mr Rogers, who, having broke the seal—"Preserve us, Richard!" said Nelly, "that's a lang epistle! I daursay the captain's made his will in't—what does he say?"

"It's a kind, sensible, weel-written letter," said Richard, "for John was a genius a' his days; and there is mair about a will in't than ye're aware o'. But there's nae secret in't. George will read it."

The letter was then given to the genius, who read as follows:—

"Dear Dick,—As one of my crew, Bill Somers, who has sailed with me for a dozen years, is going down to Scotland, and will pass your way, I take the opportunity of writing to you, and letting you know that I am as well as a person who has as much cause to be unhappy as I have can desire to be. The cause of that unhappiness you don't know, and few know it—but I do, and that's enough. I have made some money—perhaps a good deal—but that's of no consequence. I once thought that I might have *them* of my own flesh and blood to inherit it; however, that was not to be. It is a long story, and a sad story—one that you know nothing about, and which it is of no use to

tell you about now. As things are, my nevy George is to be heir to whatever money, goods, and chattels I possess."

As her son read this, Nelly thought that it was nonsense, after all, to say that a squint first-foot was unlucky.

"Read on, George," said his father, "and tak heed to what your uncle says."

The boy resumed the letter, and again read—

"Now, as my nevy is to be my heir, I think it my duty to lay down a sort of chart—or call it what you like—by which I would wish him to shape his future conduct. I am glad to hear that his head is of the right sort; but let us have none of your fiddle ornaments about it. A lofty prow is not always the best for a storm, and looks bad enough with a Dutch stern. Beware, also, how you let him to sea before his vessel is fairly rigged, caulked, and waterproof—or, if you do, then look out for his growing top-heavy, and capsising in the turn of a handspike. If you set him off with a bare allowance of ballast, and without a single letter of credit—do you expect him to bring home a cargo? It is stuff, Dick—arrant stuff! All your boy exhibitions are downright swindling. Prodigies, forsooth!—why, parrots can speak, and jackdaws chatter. Or, to render myself intelligible to your agricultural senses, a tree blossoms in its first year, and a selfish, deluded idiot plucks it up, exhibits it in the market-place—the bud perishes, and the tree withers, while gaping lubbers wonder that it did not bear fruit! Now, Dick, this is always the case with all you fast-sailing miracles. Give a boy the helm, and get him to the drudgery of the cabin again, if you can.

"As to his love affairs, provided the girl of his choice be virtuous, and tolerably pretty—though neither very rich nor very intelligent—see that you don't strike off at a tangent, and, like one of your own stupid cattle, run counter to his will. If you do, it will only hasten what you wish to prevent—or render a marriage certain, which the young couple thought sufficiently doubtful. Besides, your opposition might spoil a poor girl's reputation; and I have always found that imputations of a certain class, upon a man, are like marks left upon the sand within a tide-mark; but to a woman—a lovely, helpless woman—they adhere like a limpit to the rock. Besides this, Dick, I am certain the most powerful impression of moral rectitude you can imprint upon his heart would be like a pistol fired from a cock-boat, compared to the glorious and irresistible broadside of a seventy-four,

when you contrast its influence upon his actions with the delightful and conquering emotions of love and esteem which he entertains for an amiable woman. Don't preach to me, Dick, for I know when the devil, the world, and the flesh, war against our better principles, and when early instructions, counsels, and all that sort of things, are fairly run down and drop astern, why, if a fellow just think for a moment of the beautiful being, whose soul is as pure as the blue sea on a summer day—if he just think of her—or of her last words, '*Don't forget me!*'—belay! is the word—about goes the helm—head round from the lee-shore of inconsistency, and he is again quietly moored in the fair-way of virtue.

"When he begins to shape into manhood, *Discretion* is the watch-word; and whatever he or others may think of his abilities, let him douse *Presumption*, and stow it below, hoist a *desire to please* at the fore-top, place *Perseverance*, at the helm, and *Civility* and *Moderate Ambition* upon the watch. People say they like a plain-spoken, honest fellow, who says what he thinks. But it is all a fudge. Just speak in the jack-blunt manner which they praise respecting themselves, and, mark me, they will march off to another tune. Let any man practise this for a time, and he will soon be hated by every soul on board. I don't mean to advise dissimulation; but a man can get enemies enough without making them; therefore, where he has no good to say of a person, though they may have injured him, let him hold his tongue.

"Another thing, and an important one, for him to remember, is—he who is the king of good fellows, and a 'good soul' amongst his associates, is styled by the public a thoughtless man, and by his enemies a drunkard. Now, Dick, in the world of business, a *good fellow* simply means a *good-for-nothing*. Therefore, see to it, and put my nevy on the look-out; for, not to speak of the growing influence of habit, just attribute unsteadiness to a man, and you bring him a wind ahead, stop his credit, and hurl him to ruin headlong. Sobriety is his compass—sobriety is his pas port.

"Again, Dick, I would neither wish to see him a booby nor a mawworm; but I must tell you that the opinion the world forms of us is often cast upon very trivial circumstances. A heedlessly committed action, which we forget in half-an-hour, others will remember to our disadvantage for twelve months. There is nothing like being well-braced with circumspection; let him always look well to his bearing and distance, or he will soon find himself out in his latitude. No man

of any ambition, or whether he was ambitious or not, ever loved a man who presumed to be in all things wiser that himself. I don't wish to lecture upon humbug humility, but diffidence and good-breeding should never be under the poop. Let him take heed, also, how he dabbles in politics or religion. Both concern him, and he must think and act upon both; but he must do so as becomes a man. I hate all your noisy boatswain politicians, both aboard the Commons and out of it. The moment I see a lubberly fellow swinging his arms about and blowing a hurricane, whether he be endeavouring to blow a nation or a tavern into agitation—there rages a grand rascal, say I; his patriotism, and the froth which he scatters from his mouth, are of a piece. Now, as to his religious principles, of all things, let him keep them to himself. Every man is as much in the right, in his own estimation, as he is. Nothing will procure a man more enemies than a real or affected singularity in matters of religion. For though there is a great deal of good sense afloat in the world, yet there is such a fry of feverish, canting, small craft, always skulking about, and peeping into our *pees* and *ques*, which, though they cannot sink your character, they annoy it with their sparrow-hail. In a word, Dick, every intelligent being's religion lies between his own conscience and his Maker. Give my nevy a Bible, with a father's best blessing—in it he will find the ennobling hopes of eternity, and learn to do unto others as he would wish others to do unto him; and this, from the bottom of my heart, is the advice of his uncle Jack.

"A sterling, upright, moral character, is absolutely indispensable. If the heart be well built, and kept in good sailing trim, he will have a tell-tale there which will keep all right aloft. As well set a seaman upon a voyage of discovery without a compass, as a young fellow upon the world without a character. But, d'ye see, because you can't go to sea without a compass of this kind, you are not to expect that, in all cases, it will insure you of reaching the pole. No, Dick, it is rather like a pilot sent out to steer you in, when you are within sight of land, and without whose assistance you cannot reach the port.

"In conversation, too, I hate to see a smooth-water puppy running at the rate of twelve knots, as if no vessel in the fleet could sail but his own. I have seen fellows of this sort showing off like gilded pinnaces at a regatta, while they were only showing how little they had on board. Two things, in particular, I wish my nevy to avoid—namely, argufying in company, and speaking about himself. There is a time and a place for everything; and, though argument be well

enough in its way, he who is always upon the look-out for one is just as sure as he finds it to find an enemy; and, as to speaking of one's-self, independent of its ill-breeding, it is like a dose of salt-water served round the company. The grand secret of conversation is, to say little in a way to please, and the moment you fail to do so, it is time to shove your boat off. Whenever you see a person yawn in your company, take your hat.

"Independent of these things, let him look well to his tide-table. Without punctuality, the best character becomes a bad one. The moment a man breaks his word, or becomes indifferent to his engagement, why, the confidence of his commodore is at an end; and, instead of being promoted to the quarterdeck, he may slave before the mast till the boatswain's last whistle pipes all hands to his funeral. Punctuality, Dick—systematical, methodical punctuality—is a fortune to a fellow ready made. Let him once listen to the syren voice of delay—neglect to weigh anchor with the tide, and if he don't drift back with the current, go to pieces on a sand-bank, or be blown to sticks by a foul wind, my name's not Jack. Let him keep a sharp eye upon the beginning, the middle, and the end of everything he undertakes. He must not tack about, like a fellow on a cruise or a roving commission, but, whatever wind blows, maintain a straight course, keeping his head to the port. Burns, the poet, spoke like a philosopher, when he said it was the misfortune of his life to be without an aim. But I tell you what, Dick, we must not only have an object to steer to, but it must be a reasonable object. A madman may say he is determined to go to the North Pole, or the moon; but that's not the thing, Dick: our anticipations must be likelihoods, our ambitions probabilities; and when we have made frequent calculations, and find ourselves correct in our reckoning, though we have made but little way, then down with despondency, and stick to perseverance. I don't mean a beggarly, servile, grovelling perseverance, but the unsubdued determination of an unconquerable spirit, riding out the storm, and, while small craft sink on every side, disdaining to take in a single reef.

"Now, having said thus much about shaping his course, and laying in a freight, it is material that I drop a concluding word with regard to his rigging. Send him out with patched canvas, and the veriest punt that ever disgraced the water will clear out before him. A patch upon his coat will be an embargo on his prospects. People affect to despise tailors; but it is base ingratitude, or shallow dissimulation. Not that I would for the world see my nevy an insignifi-

cant dandy, but remember, the moment the elbows of your coat open, every door shuts.

"But my fingers are cramped with this long epistle, and, moreover, the paper is full; and with love to nevy George, to Nelly, and the little ones, I am, dear Dick, your affectionate brother,

"JOHN ROGERS,

"Otherwise, JACK THE RAMBLER."

All applauded this letter, when they had heard it, and they vowed the captain was a clever fellow—a noble fellow—ay, and a wise one; and they drank his health and a happy New Year to him, though half of what he had written, from his nautical types and symbols, was as Greek and Latin unto those who heard it, and worse unto George the Genius, who read it; though some parts of it all understood.

When the health of Captain Rogers had gone round—

"I wonder in the world," said Richard, "what it can be that my brother aye refers to about being unhappy? I've written to him fifty times, to try to fathom it; but I never could—he never would gie me ony satisfaction."

"Why," said the seaman, as he sat leaning forward, and turning round his sou-wester between his knees, "I believe I know, or I can guess a something about the matter. It's about ten years ago, according to my reckoning, we were coming down the Mediterranean—the captain was as fine a looking young fellow then as ever stood upon a deck. Well, as I was saying, we were coming down the Mediterranean, and at Genoa we took a gentleman and his daughter on board. She was a pretty creature; I've seen nothing like her neither before nor since. So, as I'm telling you, we took them on board at Genoa, for England, and they had not been many days on board, till every one saw, and I saw—though my eyes are none o' the smartest—that the captain could look on nothing but his lovely passenger. It wasn't hard to see that she looked much in the same

way at him, and I have seen them walking on the deck at night, with her arm through his, in the moonlight; and, let me tell you, a glorious sight it is—moonlight on the Mediterranean! It is enough to make a man fall in love with moonlight itself, if there be nothing else beside him. Well, d'ye see, as I am saying, it wasn't long until the old gentleman, her father, saw which way the land lay; and one day we heard the lady weeping; she never came out of her cabin during the rest of the voyage, nor did her father again speak to the master. We were laid up for a long time, and there was a report that the captain and her had got married, unknown to her father. However, we sailed on a long voyage; we weren't back to England again for more than twelve months; but the day after we landed, the captain shut himself up, and, for long and long, we used to find him sitting with the salt-water in his eyes. We again heard the report that he had been married, and also that his lady had died in childbed; but whether the child was living or ever was living, or whether it was a boy or a girl, we didn't know; nor did he know; and, I believe, he never was able to hear any more about the old gentleman—so, as I say, that's all I know about the matter, poor fellow."

Now, the squinting sailor remained two days in the house of Richard Rogers, and he was such a comical man, and such a goodnatured, kindhearted man, that Mrs Rogers was certain he would be a lucky first-foot, even though he had a very unfortunate cross look with his eyes; and she was the more convinced in this opinion, because, in a conversation she had had with him, and in which she had inquired—"What siller he thought the captain might be worth?"—"Why, I'm saying," answered the sailor, "Captain Rogers is worth a round twenty thousand, if he be worth a single penny;—and that, I'm thinking, is a pretty comfortable thing for Master George to be heir to!"—"Ay, and so it is," re-

sponded Nelly. And there was no longer anything disagreeable in the sailor's squint.

Well, week followed week, and month succeeded month—spring came, and summer came, and harvest followed; and it was altogether a lucky year to Richard Rogers. Nelly declared that the squinting sailor had been an excellent first-foot.

Another year came, another, and another, until eight years passed round since they had been visited by the outlandish seaman. Nelly had had both lucky and unlucky first-feet. George the Genius was now a lad of twenty, and the other children were well grown—but George was still a genius, and nothing but a genius. He was indeed a good scholar—a grand scholar, as his mother declared—and a great one, as his father affirmed. He had been brought up to no profession, for it was of no use thinking of a profession for one who was heir to twenty thousand pounds; and, at any rate, his genius was sure to make him a fortune. In what way his genius was to do this was never taken into consideration. Many people said, "If we had your genius, George, we could make a fortune." And George thought he would and could. The joiner in the next village, however, said, that "Wi' a' George's genius, he didna believe he could mak an elshin-heft, and stick him!—and, in his opinion, there was mair to be made by making elshin-hefts than by writing ballants!"

As I have said, eight years had passed; it was again the last night of the old year, and a very dark and stormy night it was. Mr Rogers, his wife, their son George, and the rest of their family, had again seen the old year out, and the New Year in, and exchanged with each other the compliments of the season, when the cuckoo-clock again announced the hour of twelve. Nelly had "*happed* up the fire" with her own hands—a thing that she always did on the last night of the old year, that it might not be out on a New-year's morning. She was again wondering who would be their first-foot, and

expressing a hope that it would be a lucky one, when a chaise drew up before the house, and the driver, dismounting and knocking at the window, begged that they would favour him with a light, as the roads were exceedingly dark, and the lamps of the chaise had been blown out by the wind.

"A licht!" exclaimed Betty, half petrified at the request; "preserve us! is the man beside himsel? Do ye imagine that onybody is gaun to gie ye out a licht the first thing on a New-year's morning? Gae awa!—gae awa!"

In vain the driver expostulated—he had met with similar treatment at other houses at which he had called. "Ye hae nae business to travel at siccan a time o' nicht," replied Betty to all his arguments. Her husband said little, for he entertained some of his wife's scruples against giving a light at such a time. George mildly ridiculed the absurdity of the refusal; but—"I am mistress o' my ain house," answered his mother, "and I'll gie a licht out o't when I please, and only when I please. Wi' a' yer learnin, George, ye wad be a great fool sometimes."

The voice of a lady was now heard at the window with the driver, saying—"Pray, good people, do permit us to light the lamps, and you shall have any recompense." No sooner did George hear the lady's voice, than, in despite of his mother's frowns, he sprang to the door and unlocked it. With an awkward sort of gallantry he ushered in the fair stranger. She was, indeed, the loveliest first-foot that had ever crossed the threshold of Mrs Rogers. She had no sooner entered, than Nelly saw and felt this, and, with a civility which formed a strange contrast to her answers to the driver, she smoothed down for her the cushioned arm-chair by the side of the fire. The young lady (for she hardly appeared to exceed seventeen) politely declined the proffered hospitality. "Sit down, my sweet young leddy; now, do sit down just to oblige me," said Nelly. "Ye are our first-foot, and I hope—I'm sure ye'll be a lucky ane; and ye wadna, ye

canna be gaun out without tasting wi' us on a New-year's morning."

The young lady sat down; and Nelly hastened to spread upon the table little mountains of short-bread (of which she was a notable maker), with her spice-loaf, milk-scones, and her best ewe-cheese, and her cream-cheese, which was quite a fancy! And while his mother was so occupied, George produced three or four sorts of home-made wine of his own manufacture; for, in his catalogue of capabilities as a genius, it must be admitted that he had some which might be said to belong to the useful.

"Now, make yoursel at hame, my dear leddy," said Nelly; "need nae pressing. Or if ye wad like it better, I'll get ye ready a cup o' tea in a minute or twa; the kettle's boiling; and it's only to mask, so dinna say no. Indeed, if ye'll only consent to stop a' nicht, ye shall hae the best bed in the house, and we'll put the horses in the stable; for it's no owre and aboon lucky to gie or tak a licht on a New-year's morning."

A faint smile played across the lips of the fair stranger, at the mixture of Nelly's kindness and credulity; and she thanked her for her hospitality, but stated that she must proceed on her journey, as she was hastening to the death-bed of a near and only relative. The young lady, however, sat longer than she wist, for she had entered into conversation with George—how, she knew not, and he knew not; but they were pleased with each other; and there were times (though it was only at times) that George could talk like an inspired being; and this was one of those times. The knowledge, the youth, the beauty of the lovely stranger, had kindled all the fires of his genius within him. Even his father was surprised, and his mother forgot that the chaise-driver was lighting the lamps; and how long the fair lady might have listened to George, we cannot tell, had not the driver hinted, "All's ready, ma'am; the horses will get no

good in the cold." She arose, and took leave of her entertainers; and George accompanied her to the chaise, and shook her hand, and bade her farewell, as though she had been an old and a very dear friend. He even thought, as she replied, "*Farewell*," that there was a sadness in her tone, as if she were sorry to say it.

Richard and his spouse retired to rest; but still the thought of having given a light out of her house on a New-year's morning troubled her, and she feared that, after all, her lovely first-foot would prove an unlucky one. George laid his head upon his pillow, to dream dreams, and conjure up visions of the fair stranger.

A short week had not passed, however—Richard was returning from Kelso market, the roads were literally a sheet of ice (it is said that bones are most easily broken in frosty weather), his horse fell, and rolled over him, and he was carried home bruised, and with his leg broken. Nelly was loud in her lamentations, and yet louder in her upbraidings, against George and against herself, that she permitted a light to be carried out of her house on a New-year's morning.

"It was borne in upon me," said she, "the leddy wadna be lucky, that something would come out o' the gicin the licht!"

But this was not all: before two months elapsed, and just as her husband was beginning to set his foot to the ground again, from friction and negligence together, the thrashing-machine took fire. It was still a severe frost, there was scarce a drop of water to be procured about the place, and, in spite of the exertions of all the people on the farm, and their neighbours, who came to their assistance, the fierce flames roared, spread, and rushed from stack to stack, until the barn, the stables, the stackyard, and the dwelling-house presented a heap of smouldering ashes and smoking ruins. Yet this was not the worst evil which had

that day fallen upon Richard Rogers. He was one of those individuals who have an aversion to the very name of a bank, and he had the savings and the profits of twenty years—in fifty-pound notes, and in five-pound notes, and crown-pieces—locked away in a strong drawer in his bedroom. In the confusion of the fire, and as he bustled halting about, with the hope of saving some of his wheat-stacks (for wheat was selling high at the time), he forgot the strong drawer, and his twenty years' savings, until flames were seen bursting from the window of his bedroom. The window had been left open, and some of the burning materials having been blown into the room, it was the first part of the house which caught fire.

"Oh, I'm ruined!—I'm ruined!" cried Richard; "my siller!—my siller!—my hard-won siller!"

A rush was made to the bedroom; but before they reached it, the stairs gave way, the floor fell in, and a thick flame and suffocating smoke buried the fruits of poor Richard's industry—the treasure which he had laid up for his children.

"Now, I am a beggar!" groaned he, lifting up his hands, while the flames almost scorched his face.

"Oh, black sorrow tak that leddy!" cried Nelly, wringing her hands; "what tempted her to be my first-foot?—or what tempted me to gie her a licht? George! George! it was a' you! We gied fire out o' the house, and now we've brocht it about us! Wae's me!—wae's me! I'm a ruined woman! Oh, Richard, what will we do? What was ye thinking about, that ye didna mind the siller?"

Richard knew nothing of the number of his notes, and his riches had indeed vanished in a flash of fire! He was now obliged to take shelter with his family in an outhouse, which had been occupied by a cottar. He had not heard from Captain Rogers for more than twelve months, and he knew not where he was; therefore he could expect no im-

mediate assistance from him. It was now necessary that George should bring his genius into action—his father could no longer support him in idleness; and, as it had always been said that he had only to exert his genius to make a fortune, George resolved that he would exert it, and he was pleased with the thought of setting his father on his feet again by the reward of his talents. He had read somewhere in the writings of Dr Johnson (and the doctor had a good deal of experience in the matter), that "genius was *sure* to meet with its reward in London;" and, if the doctor was *sure* of that, George was as *sure* that he was a genius, and therefore he considered the reward as certain. So George determined, as his uncle might live many years, that he would go to London and make a fortune for himself, and to assist his father in the meantime. A cow was taken to Kelso market and sold for eight pounds, and the money was given to George, to pay his expenses to the metropolis, and to keep him there until his genius should put him in the way of making the anticipated fortune. His coat was not exactly such a one as his uncle desired he should be sent out into the world in—not that it was positively a bad coat, but it was beginning to be rather smooth and clear about the elbows, a lighter shade ran up on each side of the seams at the back, and his hat was becoming bare round the edges on the crown. To be sure, as his mother said, "he would aye hae ink beside him, and a dip o' ink would help to hide that." These, however, were things that could not be mended—the wardrobe of the whole family had been consumed at the fire; but these things did not distress George, for he did not consider it necessary for a genius to appear in a new coat. There were many tears shed on both sides when George bade adieu to his father, his mother, and his brethren, and took his journey towards London.

It was about the middle of March when he arrived in

the metropolis; and, having spent two days wandering about and wondering at all he saw, without once thinking how his genius was to make the long-talked-of fortune, on the third day he delivered a letter of introduction, which he had received, to a broker in the city. Now it so happened that in this letter poor George was spoken of as an "*extraordinary genius!*"

"So you are a *great genius*, young man, my friend informs me," said the broker; "what have you a genius for?"

George blushed and looked confused; he almost said—"for everything;" but he hung down his head, and said nothing.

"Is it a genius for making machines—or playing the fiddle—or what?" added the broker.

George looked more and more confused; he replied—"that he could neither make machines, nor did he know anything of music."

"Then I hope it's not a genius for making ballads, is it?" continued the other.

"I have written ballads," answered George, hesitatingly.

"Oh, then, you must try the west end—you won't do for the city," added the broker; "your genius is an article that's not in demand here."

George left the office of the London citizen, mortified and humiliated. For a dozen long years everybody had told him he was a genius; and now, when the question was put to him—"what had he a genius for?" he could not answer it. This rebuff rendered him melancholy for several days, and he wandered from street to street, sometimes standing, unconscious of what he was doing, before the window of a bookseller, till, jostled by the crowd, he moved on, and again took his stand before the window of the printseller, the jeweller, or the vender of caricatures. Still he believed that he was a genius, and he was conscious that that genius

might make him a fortune; only he knew not how to apply it—he was puzzled where to begin. Yet he did not despair. He thought the day would come—but how it was to come he knew not. He took out his uncle's letter, which his father had put into his hands when he left him, and he read it again, and said, it was all very good, but what was he the better of it?—it was all very true—too true, for he understood every word of it now; and he turned round his arm, and examined his coat with a sigh, and beheld that the lining was beginning to show its unwelcome face through the seams of the elbows. I should have told you that he was then sitting in a coffee-house, sipping his three-halfpence-worth of coffee, and *kitchening* his pennyworth of bread, which was but half-a-slice, slightly buttered—and a thin slice, too, compared with those of his mother's cutting. He was beginning to feel one of the first rewards of genius—*eating by measure!* To divert the melancholy of his feelings, and the gloom of his prospects, he took up a magazine which lay on the table before him. His eyes fell upon a review of a poem which had been lately published, and for which the author was said to have received a thousand guineas!

"*A thousand guineas!*" exclaimed George, dropping the magazine—"*a thousand guineas!* I shall make a fortune yet!"

He had read some of the extracts from the poem—he was sure he could write better lines—his eyes flashed with ecstasy—his very nostrils distended with delight—a thousand guineas seemed already in his pocket! though, alas! out of the eight pounds which he had received as the price of his father's cow, with all his management, and with all his economy, he had but eight shillings left. But his resolution was taken—he saw fortune hovering over him with her golden wings—he purchased a quire of paper and half-a-dozen quills, and hurried to his garret—for his lodging *was*

a garret, in which there was nothing but an old bed and an olden chair, not even an apology for a table; but sometimes the bed served the purpose of one, and at other times he sat upon the floor like a Turk, and wrote upon the chair. He was resolved to write an epic; for the idea of a thousand guineas had taken possession of all his faculties. He made a pen—he folded the paper—he rubbed his hands across his brow for a subject. He might have said with Byron—had Byron then said it—

"I want a hero!"

He thought of a hundred subjects, and with each the idea of his mother's beautiful but most unlucky first-foot was mingled! At length he fixed upon one, and began to write. He wrote most industriously—in short, he wrote for a thousand guineas! He tasked himself to four hundred lines a-day, and in a fortnight he finished a poem containing about five thousand. It was longer than that for which the thousand guineas had been given; but George thought, though he should get no more for his, that even a thousand guineas was very good payment for a fortnight's labour. Of the eight shillings which we mentioned his being in possession of when he began the epic, he had now but threepence, and he was in arrears for the week's rent of his garret. The landlady began to cast very suspicious glances at her lodger—she looked at him with the sides of her eyes. She did not know exactly what a genius meant, but she had proof positive it did not mean a gentleman. At times, also, she would stand with his garret-door in her hand, as if she intended to say, "Mr Rogers, I would thank you for last week's rent."

Scarce was the ink dry upon the last page of his poem, when George, folding up the manuscript, put it carefully into his coat-pocket, and hurried to the bookseller of whom he had read that he had given a thousand guineas for a shorter work, and one, too, that, he was satisfied in his own

mind, was every way inferior to his. We do not say that he exactly expected the publisher to fall down and worship him, the moment he read the first page of his production, but he did believe that he would regard him as a prodigy, and at once offer terms for the copyright. He was informed by a shopman, however, that the publisher was engaged, and he left the manuscript, stating that he would call again. George did call again, and yet again, trembling with hope and anxiety; and he began to discover that a great London publisher was as difficult of access as his imperial mightiness the Emperor of China. At length, by accident, he found the bibliopole in his shop. He gave a glance at George—it was a withering glance—a glance at his coat and at his elbows. The unfortunate genius remembered, when it was too late, the passage in his uncle's letter, "the moment the elbows of your coat open, every door shuts." We have already mentioned that the lining was beginning to peer through them, and, during the fervour of inspiration, or the *furor* of excitement in composing the epic, he had not observed that the rent had become greater, that the lining, too, had given way, and that now his linen, which was not of a snow colour, was visible. He inquired after his manuscript.

"What is it?" asked the publisher.

"A poem," answered George—"an epic!"

The man of books smiled; he gave another look at the forlorn elbows of the genius—it was evident he measured the value of his poetry by the value of his coat.

"A poem!" replied he; "poetry's a drug! It is of no use for such as you to think about writing poetry. Give the young man his manuscript," said he to the shopman, and walked away.

The reader may imagine the feelings of our disappointed genius: they were bitter as the human soul could bear. Yet he did not altogether despair; there were more booksellers

in London. It is unnecessary to tell how he offered his manuscript to another, and another, yea, to twenty more—how he examined what books they had published in their windows—and how he entered their shops with fear and trembling, for his hopes were becoming fainter and more faint. Some opened it, others did not, but all shook their heads, and said, nobody would undertake to publish poetry. or that it was not in their way; some advised him to publish by subscription, but George Rogers did not know a soul in London; others recommended him to try the magazines. It was with a heavy heart that he abandoned the idea of publishing his epic, and with it also his fond dream of obtaining a thousand guineas. He had resolved within himself that the moment he received the money, he would go down to Scotland, and rebuild his father's house; and all who knew him should marvel, and hold up their hands, at the fame and fortune of George the Genius. But a hungry man cannot indulge in day-dreams, and his visions by night are an aggravation of his misery; he therefore had to renounce the fond delusion, that he might have bread to eat. His last resource was to try the magazines. His epic was out of the question for them; and he wrote songs, odes, essays, and short tales, on every scrap of paper, and on the back of every letter in his possession. With this bundle of "shreds and patches," he waited upon several magazine publishers. One told him he was overstocked with contributions; another, that he might leave the papers, and he should have an answer in two or three weeks. But three weeks was an eternity to a man who had not tasted food for three days. A third said, "he could seldom make room for new contributors—poetry was not an article for which he gave money—essays were at a discount, and he only published tales by writers of established reputation." There was one article, however, which pleased him, and he handed George a guinea for it. The tears started into his eyes as

he received it—he thought he would never be poor again—he was as proud of that guinea as if it had been a thousand! It convinced him more and more that he *was* a genius. I need not tell you how that guinea was husbanded, and how it was doled out; but, although George reckoned that it would purchase two hundred and fifty-two penny loaves, and that that was almost as many as a man need to eat in a twelvemonth, yet the guinea vanished to the last penny before a month went round.

He had frequently called at the shop of his first patron, the publisher of the magazine; and on one day when he so called—

"Oh, Mr Rogers," said the bookseller, "I have just heard of a little job which will suit you. Lord L—— wishes me to find him a person to write a pamphlet in defence of the war. You are just the person to do it. Make it pungent and peppery, and it will be five or ten guineas for you, and perhaps the patronage of his lordship; and you know no bookseller will look at genius without patronage."

A new light broke upon George—he discovered why his epic had been rejected. He hurried to his garret. He began the pamphlet with the eagerness of frenzy. It was both peppery and passionate. Before the afternoon of the following day it was completed, and he flew with it to the house of the nobleman. Our genius was hardly, as the reader may suppose, in a fitting garb for the drawing room or library of a British peer, and the pampered menial who opened the door attempted to dash it back in his face. He, however, neither lacked spirit nor strength, and he forced his way into the lobby.

"Inform his lordship," said George, "that Mr Rogers has called with the pamphlet in defence of the war!" And he spoke this with an air of consequence and authority.

The man of genius was ushered into the library of the

literary lord, who, raising his glass to his eye, surveyed him from head to foot with a look partaking of scorn and disgust; and there was no mistaking that its meaning was —"Stand back!" At length he desired our author to remain where he was, and to read his manuscript. The chagrin which he felt at this reception marred the effect of the first two or three sentences, but, as he acquired his self-possession, he read with excellent feeling and emphasis. Every sentence told. "Good! good!" said the peer, rubbing his hands—"that will do!—excellent!—give me the manuscript!"

George was stepping boldly forward to the chair of his lordship, when the latter, rising, stretched his arm at its extreme length across the table, and received the manuscript between his finger and thumb, as though he feared contagion from the touch of the author, or fancied that the plague was sewed up between the seams of his threadbare coat. The peer glanced his eye over the title-page, which George had not read—"A Defence of the War with France," said he; "by—by who!—the deuce!—George Rogers!—who is George Rogers?"

"I am, your lordship," answered the author.

"You are!—you!" said his lordship, "you the author of *the Defence?* Impertinent fool! had not you the idea from me? Am not I to pay for it? The work is mine!" So saying, he rang the bell, and addressing the servant who entered, added, "Give that gentleman a guinea."

George withdrew, in rage and bewilderment, and his poverty, not his will, consented to accept the insulting remuneration. Within two days, he saw at the door of every bookseller a placard with the words—"Just published, A DEFENCE OF THE WAR WITH FRANCE, by the Right Hon. Lord L——." George compared himself to Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage—he had bartered his name, his fame, and the fruits of his genius, for a paltry guinea.

He began to be ashamed of the shabbiness of his garments—the withering meaning of the word clung round him—he felt it as a festering sore eating into his very soul, and he appeared but little upon the streets. He had been several weeks without a lodging, and though it was now summer, the winds of heaven afford but a comfortless blanket for the shoulders when the midnight dews fall upon the earth. He had slept for several nights in a hayfield in the suburbs, on the Kent side of the river; and his custom was, to lift a few armfuls aside on a low rick, and laying himself down in the midst of it, gradually placing the hay over his feet, and the rest of his body, until the whole was covered. But the hay season did not last for ever; and one morning, when fast asleep in the middle of the rick, he was roused by a sudden exclamation of mingled horror and astonishment. He looked up, and beside him stood a countryman, with his mouth open, and his eyes gazing wistfully. In his hand he held a hayfork, and on the prongs of the fork was one of the skirts of poor George's coat. He gazed angrily at the countryman, and ruefully at the fragment of his unfortunate coat; and, rising, he drew round the portion of it that remained on his back, to view "the rent the envious *hayfork* made."

"By goam! chap," said the countryman, when he regained his speech, "I have made thee a spencer; but I might have run the fork through thee, and it would have been no blame of mine."

They were leading the hay from the field, and the genius was deprived of his lodging. It was some nights after this he was wandering in the neighbourhood of Poplar, fainting and exhausted—sleeping, starting, dreaming—as he dragged his benumbed and wearied limbs along; and, as he was crossing one of the bridges over the canal, he saw one of the long fly-boats, which ply with goods to Birmingham and Manchester, lying below it. George climbed over the

bridge, and dropped into the boat, and finding a quantity of painted sailcloth near the head of it, which was used as a covering for the goods, to protect them from the weather, he wrapped himself up in it, and lay down to sleep. How long he lay he knew not, for he slept most soundly; and, when he awoke, he felt more refreshed than he had been for many nights. But he started as he heard the sound of voices near him; and, cautiously withdrawing the canvas from over his face, he beheld that the sun was up; and, to increase his perplexity, fields, trees, and hedges were gliding past him. While he slept, the boatmen had put the horses to the barge, and were now on their passage to Birmingham, and several miles from London; but, though they had passed and repassed the roll of canvas, they saw not, and they suspected not, that they "carried Cæsar and his fortunes." George speedily comprehended his situation; and extricating his limbs from the folds of the canvas as quietly as he could, he sprang to his feet, stepped to the side of the boat, and, with a desperate bound, reached the bank of the canal.

"Holloa!" shouted the astonished boatmen—"holloa! what have you been after?"

George made no answer, but ran with his utmost speed down the side of the canal.

"Holloa! stop thief!—stop thief!" bellowed the boatmen; and, springing to the ground, they gave chase to the genius. The boys, also, who rode the horses that dragged the boat unlinked them, and joined in the pursuit. It was a noble chase! But when George found himself pursued, he left the side of the canal, and took to the fields, clearing hedge, ditch, fence, and stone wall, with an agility that would have done credit to a first-rate hunter. The horses were at fault in following his example, and the boys gave up the chase; and when the boatmen had pursued him for the space of half-a-mile, finding they were losing ground at every step, they returned, panting and breathless, to their

boat. George, however, slackened his pace but little until he arrived at the Edgeware Road, and there he resumed his wonted slow and melancholy saunter, and sorrowfully returned towards London. He now, poor fellow, sometimes shut his eyes, to avoid the sight of his own shadow, which he seemed to regard as a caricature of his forlorn person; and, in truth, he now appeared miserably forlorn—I had almost said ludicrously so. His coat has been already mentioned, with its wounded elbows, and imagine it now with the skirts which had been torn away with the hayfork, when the author of an epic was nearly forked upon a cart, as he reposed in a bundle of hay—imagine now the coat with that skirt awkwardly pinned to it—fancy also that the button-holes had become useless, and that all the buttons, save two, had taken leave of his waistcoat—his trousers, also, were as smooth at the knees as though they had been glazed and hot-pressed, and they were so bare, so very bare, that the knees could almost be seen through them without spectacles. Imagine, also, that this suit had once been black, and that it had changed colours with the weather, the damp hay, the painted canvas, and the cold earth on which he slept; and add to this a hat, the brim of which was broken, and the crown fallen in—with shoes, the soles of which had departed, and the heels involuntarily gone down, as if ready to perform the service of slippers. Imagine these things, and you have a personification of George Rogers, as he now wended his weary way towards London.

He had reached the head of Oxford Street, and he was standing irresolute whether to go into the city or turn into the Park, to hide himself from the eyes of man, and to lie down in solitude with his misery, when a lady and a gentleman crossed the street to where he stood. Their eyes fell upon him—the lady started—George beheld her, and he started too—he felt his heart throb, and a blush burn over

his cheek. He knew her at the first glance—it was the fair stranger—his mother's first-foot! He turned round—he hurried towards the Park—he was afraid—he was ashamed to look behind him. A thousand times had he wished to meet that lady again, and now he had met her, and he fled from her—the shame of his habiliments entered his soul. Still he heard footsteps behind him, and he quickened his pace. He had entered the Park, but yet he heard the sound of the footsteps following.

"Stop, young man!" cried a voice from behind him. But George walked on as though he heard it not. The word "stop!" was repeated; but, instead of doing so, he was endeavouring to hurry onward, when, as we have said, one of the shoes which had become slippers, and which, bad before, were now worse from his flight across the ploughed fields, came off, and he was compelled to stop and stoop, to put it again upon his foot, or to leave his shoe behind him. While he stopped, therefore, to get his shoe again upon his foot, the person who followed him came up—it was the gentleman whom he had seen with the fair unknown. With difficulty he obtained a promise from George that he would call upon him at his house in Pimlico in the afternoon; and when he found our genius too proud to accept of money, he thrust into the pocket of the memorable skirt, which the hayfork had torn from the parent cloth, all the silver which he had upon his person.

When the gentleman had left him, George burst into tears. They were tears of pride, of shame, and of agony.

At length, he took the silver from the pocket of his skirt; he counted it in his hand—it amounted to nearly twenty shillings. Twenty shillings will go farther in London than in any city in the world, with those who know how to spend it—but much depends upon that. By all the by-ways he could find, George winded his way down to Rosemary Lane, where the "*Black and Blue Reviver*" worketh miracles,

and where the children of Israel are its high priests. Within an hour, wonderful was the metamorphosis upon the person of George Rogers. At eleven o'clock he was clothed as a beggar—at twelve he was shabby-genteel. The hat in ruins was replaced by one of a newer shape, and that had been brushed and ironed till it was as clear as a looking-class. The skirtless coat was thrown aside for an olive-coloured one of metropolitan cut, with a velvet collar, and of which, as the Israelite who sold it said, "de *glosh* was not off." The buttonless vest was laid aside for one of a light colour, and the place of the decayed trousers was supplied by a pair of pure white; yea, his feet were enclosed in sheep-skin shoes, which, he was assured, had never been upon foot before. Such was the change produced upon the outer man of George Rogers through twenty shillings; and, thus arrayed, with a beating and an anxious heart, he proceeded in the afternoon to the home of the beautiful stranger who had been the eventful first-foot in his father's house. As he crossed the Park by the side of the Serpentine, he could not avoid stopping to contemplate, perhaps I should say admire, the change that had been wrought upon his person, as it was reflected in the water as in a mirror. When he had arrived at Pimlico, and been ushered into the house, there was surprise on the face of the gentleman as he surveyed the change that had come over the person of his guest; but in the countenance of the young lady there was more of delight than of surprise. When he had sat with them for some time, the gentleman requested that he would favour them with his history and his adventures in London. George did so from the days of his childhood, until the day when the fair lady before him became his mother's first-foot; and he recounted also his adventures and his struggles in London, as we have related them; and, as he spoke, the lady wept. As he concluded, he said—"And, until this day, I have ever found an expression, which my uncle made in a letter, verified, that

'the moment the elbows of my coat opened, every door would shut.' "

"Your uncle!" said the gentleman, eagerly; "who is he?—what is his name?"

"He commands a vessel of his own in the merchant service," replied George, "and his name is John Rogers."

"John Rogers!" added the gentleman; "and your father's name?"

"Richard Rogers," answered George.

The young lady gazed upon him anxiously, and words seemed leaping to her tongue, when the gentleman prevented her, saying, "Isabel, love, I wish to speak with this young man in private;" and she withdrew. When they were left alone, the gentleman remained silent for a few minutes, at times gazing in the face of George, and again placing his hand upon his brow. At length he said—"I know your uncle, and I am desirous of serving you—he also will assist you, if you continue to deserve it. But you must give up book-making as a business; and you must not neglect business for book-making. You understand me. I shall give you a letter to a gentleman in the city, who will take you into his counting-house; and if, at the expiration of three months, I find your conduct has been such as to deserve my approbation, you shall meet me here again."

He then wrote a letter, which, having sealed, he put, with a purse, into the hands of George, who sat speechless with gratitude and astonishment.

On the following day, George delivered the letter to the merchant, and was immediately admitted as a clerk into his counting-house. He was ignorant of the name of his uncle's friend; and when he ventured to inquire at the merchant respecting him, he merely told him, he was one whose good opinion he would not advise him to forfeit. In this state of suspense, George laboured day by day at the desk; and although he was most diligent, active, and anxious to please,

yet frequently, when he was running up figures, or making out an invoice, his secret thoughts were of the fair Isabel—the daughter of his uncle's friend, and his mother's first-foot. He regretted that he did not inform her father that he was his uncle's heir—he might then have been admitted to his house, and daily seen her on whom his thoughts dwelt. His situation was agreeable enough—it was paradise to what he had experienced; yet the three months of his probation seemed longer than twelve.

He had been a few weeks employed in the counting-house, when he received a letter from his parents. His father informed him that they had received a letter from his uncle, who was then in London; but, added he, "he has forgotten to gie us his direction, where we may write to him, or where ye may find him." His mother added an important postscript, in which she informed him that "She was sorry she was richt after a', that there wasna luck in a squintin first-foot; for he would mind o' the sailor that brought the letter, that said he was to be his uncle's heir; and now it turned out that his uncle had found an heir o' his ain."

It was the intention of George, when he had read the letter, to go to the house of his benefactor, and inquire for his uncle's address, or the name of the ship; but when he reflected that he might know neither—that he was not to return to his house for three months, nor until he was sent for—and, above all, when he thought that he was no longer his uncle's heir, and that he now could offer up no plea for looking up to the lovely Isabel—he resumed his pen with a stifled sigh, and abandoned the thought of finding out his uncle for the present.

He had been rather more than ten weeks in the office, when the unknown Isabel entered and inquired for the merchant. She smiled upon George as she passed him—the smile entered his very soul, and the pen shook in his hand. It was drawing towards evening, and the merchant re-

quested George to accompany the young lady home. Joy and agitation raised a tumult in his breast—he seized his hat—he offered her his arm—but he scarce knew what he did. For half-an-hour he walked by her side without daring or without being able to utter a single word. They entered the Park; the lamps were lighted amidst the trees along the Mall, and the young moon shone over them. It was a lovely and an imposing scene, and with it George found a tongue. He dwelt upon the effect of the scenery—he quoted passages from his own epic—and he spoke of the time when his fair companion was his mother's first-foot. She informed him that she was then hastening to the death-bed of her grandfather, whom she believed to be the only relative that she had in life—that she arrived in time to receive his blessing, and that, with his dying breath, he told her her father yet lived—and, for the first time, she heard his name, and had found him. George would have asked what that name was, but when he attempted to do so he hesitated, and the question was left unfinished. They spoke of many things, and often they walked in silence; and it was not until the watchman called, "Past nine o'clock," that they seemed to discover that, instead of proceeding towards Pimlico, they had been walking backward and forward upon the Mall. He accompanied her to her father's door, and left her with his heart filled with unutterable thoughts.

The three months had not quite expired, when the anxiously-looked-for invitation arrived, and George Rogers was to dine at the house of his uncle's friend, the father of the fair Isabel. I shall not describe his feelings as he hastened along the streets towards Pimlico. He arrived at the house, and his hand shook as he reached it to the rapper. The door was opened by a strange-looking footman. George thought that he had seen him before—it was indeed a face that, if once seen, was not easily forgotten. The footman had not

such large whiskers as Bill Somers, but they were of the same colour, and they certainly were the same eyes that had frightened his mother in the head of her first-foot. He was shown into a room where Isabel and her father waited to receive him. "When I last saw you, sir," said the latter, "you informed me you were the nephew of John Rogers. He finds he has no cause to be ashamed of you. George, my dear fellow, your uncle Jack gives you his hand! Isabel, welcome your cousin!"

"My cousin!" cried George.

"My cousin!" said Isabel.

What need we say more—before the New Year came they went down to Scotland a wedded pair, to be his mother's first-foot in the farmhouse, which had been rebuilt.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SIEGE OF PERTH.

In the year 1310, King Robert Bruce had overcome many of those extraordinary difficulties that threatened to render all the efforts of mere man unavailable in regaining for Scotland that perfect liberty of which she had so long boasted, and which, though it had never been taken from her absolutely, had been, by the unwarrantable schemes and policy of the first Edward, loosened from her grasp, and lay trampled on by the fierce genius of war. Great and wonderful, however, as had already been the prowess and determination of Bruce, and successful beyond the aspirations of hope as had been his efforts in the glorious cause of his country's freedom, there was great room for question whether Scotland would even at this period have triumphed, had the sceptre of England not fallen so opportunely into the hands of the second Edward. The first and greatest of all Scotland's foes, the first Edward, had died three years before, at Burgh-upon-Sands, leaving, as Froissart informs us, his dying injunction on his son, to boil his body in a caldron, till the bones should part with the flesh, and to carry the grim relics with him into Scotland, with the condition that they should not be buried till Scotland was subdued. The legacy of dry bones, from which the spirit of the great king had departed, was apparently all of his father that the young Edward inherited; for he soon displayed so much vacillation of policy, and so little genius for war, that, if Providence had intended to work to the hands of Bruce for the salvation of his country, she could not have brought about her designs with greater effect than by giving Bruce as an enemy the young King of England.

Things were going straight forward to the result of Bannockburn. Bruce had been successful almost everywhere. The clergy at Dundee had declared his right to the throne, and the injustice of the decision that gave Baliol the crown; the nobles, with the exception of Angus, Buchan, and some others, were in his favour; but, above all, the common people, in whom the true sovereignty of every country lies, had begun to see in their new king those qualities that are calculated to move the heart. The hopes of Bruce rose every hour; and, having scattered the forces of the English in every recent encounter, he saw the necessity, and felt the power, of seizing some of the walled towns that Edward had fortified with much care, as if stone and lime could bind the freedom of Scotland. The town of Perth was the one that seemed then of greatest importance, as well from its central situation between the Highlands and Lowlands, as from the state of its battlements, which were a regular fortification, with strong walls defended by high towers, and all surrounded by a broad and deep fosse.

The town had for some time been under siege, and, being one of those that Edward was determined to hold to the last, was promised succour with the first supplies that should enter the Tay. It was commanded by William Oliphant, an Anglicised Scot, who, with a firmness worthy of a better cause, had resolved to be true to the enemy of his country, and to give up the town only with his life. But his efforts were sorely thwarted by the remissness of Edward in sending provisions, and by the effects of a grievous famine, that, as a consequence of the intestine wars by which the country had been so wofully torn, was desolating the land in every quarter. He had already drained the pockets of the most wealthy of the citizens, by forcing them to supply him with money, by which he contrived to get in provisions to enable him to hold out against

Bruce. Among the rest, a rich burgher from the Lower Provinces, Peter of Ghent (his latter name has not reached us) was expected to lend him a large sum of money. The Fleming was, in those days, what the Scots afterwards became—remarkable for the possession of the faculty of prudence—the legitimate offspring of the genius of merchandise. By the importation of broadcloths and armour gear, he had contrived to realise a large fortune, and was reported by the good men of Perth as one of the wealthiest merchants in the kingdom. He had only one child, a daughter, commonly known by the name of Anne of Ghent, a young creature of great beauty, and, what may appear to have been somewhat remarkable in her station, of a spirit that was deeply imbued with the love of chivalry. But we would form a very inadequate estimate of the charms of that extraordinary power which overturned kingdoms and damsels' hearts wherever its influence was felt, if we were to limit its sphere to the sons and daughters of nobility. Its principles, indeed, are found in every bosom that responds to the sentiments of love and heroism; and from the humble and beautiful Anne of Ghent, up to the noble and heroic Isabella of Buchan, the spirit burned with a fervour that was only in some accounted less strong because no opportunities were afforded for its display.

It was not in Scotland that this spirit had been first fanned into a flame in the bosom of the fair Fleming, but in France, where the *preux chevalier* was seen in all his pride and glory. When about sixteen years of age, she had accompanied her father to Flanders, when he resorted thither for the purpose of traffic; and, in order to gratify his daughter, of whom he was justly proud, he had taken her to Paris, to be present at a joust held before Louis IX. The display of arms on that occasion was a trial between Sir Piers Guyard and Sir William Indelgonde, the latter of whom, having defamed the mistress of the former, had been

compelled, by order of Louis, to prove his assertion by the issue of a mortal combat. The battle ended by the death of Indelgonde; but what possessed greater charms to Anne than the details of the *duellum*, was the extraordinary sight she witnessed of twenty untried squires of France, all arrayed in shining coats of armour, with long flowing plumes of various colours on their glittering basnets, taking, according to the custom of these days, their first oaths, "before the peacock and the ladies," that they would not see with both eyes until they had accomplished some daring deed of arms. The gay bird of gaudy hues was brought into a large pavilion erected at the end of the arena; and, like that before which King Edward I. swore at Westminster when he denounced poor Scotland, was encircled with a thin covering of golden gauze, and placed on a tripod ornamented with many carved devices of chivalry. The squires, one by one, knelt before the bird, and recited their oaths, and then, turning round to the queens of their destinies, solicited like mendicants, with one knee on the ground, a silk riband to bind up the orb which was about to be deprived of the fair sight of their charms. Nearly opposite to where Anne sat, a very young chevalier of the name of Rolande of Leon knelt for his eye gear; and though twenty ladies of birth, all anxious that their gifts should be accepted, threw to him ribands of silk, it happened that, whether from chance or from some mysterious sympathy between the hand and eyes of the young mendicant, a narrow green stripe, that Anne in her enthusiasm tore hurriedly from her head-gear, fell into his willing grasp. When she saw the fluttering trophy in the hands of so comely a youth, she trembled with modest fear; for she knew that, as the daughter of a burgher, rich as he was, she had but a very questionable title to compete for the honours of chivalry; but, when she saw the riband bound round his head, and the helmet placed upon it, she was ready to faint outright,

and it was with difficulty that she retained her position on the bench. As soon as the crowd began to move, she hastened away to join her father, who was waiting for her beyond the palisades. Next day she was on her way to Flanders, and shortly afterwards she arrived at the city of Perth.

Two or three years had now passed since the fair Fleming acted the almost involuntary part of a high lady, within the pale of the *Theatre de la chevalerie*. Living, with the rich old merchant, within the walls of a city devoted to traffic, she had had few opportunities of witnessing another show of arms. The warriors of Scotland were then holding their jousts in the open fields and thick forests; and, in place of fighting for the smiles of women, were doing battle for the liberties of their ancient and much-abused country. But the rising fame of Bruce, his brother Edward, and Douglas, and Randolph, claimed her feelings of admiration; and she would have given her rosary itself, with her jewelled cross, to have got a glimpse of men of whom all the ladies of Christendom were enamoured. She often pictured to herself, as she sat in her small parlour that fronted the city wall, their forms firmly girt with their shining armour; but a visor was never lifted up to the eye of her fancy without revealing the feature of Rolande, as she saw him kneeling at her feet for the gift he solicited and obtained. The face had been deeply imprinted in her memory, and the encircling gift which she had bestowed, seemed to connect her by some indefinable tie with one whom she might never see again, but of whom she could never cease to think. His elegant and manly form, which displayed all the graces of the accomplished man-at-arms, mixed itself with all her thoughts, and her greatest delight was to prefigure to herself the appearance, on some occasion, of that same warrior, with his left eye bound by the badge she had given him, and a declaration on his tongue, as he

knelt before her, that she had the sole power of restoring him full-orbed to the light, which he might now claim as the reward of his prowess.

Anne was thus one evening indulging in some of these reveries of a love-sick brain, when Peter of Ghent entered the room. He was dressed in his Sunday's suit, with his ample surcoat of the best broadcloth, girt round the waist with a leather belt, his broad slouched hat of felt, and boots of the old Flemish style turned down at the tops, forming altogether a favourable contrast with the roughly-clad people of those early times, when the rough hats, coarse jerkins, and untanned shoes, constituted the apparel of Scotland's sons. Anne looked up, and a slight feeling of surprise passed through her mind as she noticed him thus arrayed.

"The town is still in great danger, Anne," said he, as he took a seat by her side, at the fire of blazing faggots, that threw a bright glare over the beautiful face of his daughter. "The enemies of Edward seem to be on the increase. Dundee has surrendered, the whole of Galloway has been ravaged, and Bruce, become bolder by his success, lies looking on our good town, as the wolves of Atholl look on the sheepfold in the glen."

"If there had been lions in these parts, father," answered Anne, "I might have heard from thee a comparison more suitable to the qualities of that brave soldier."

"These words, Anne," replied Peter, "but ill become a liege woman of King Edward. This poor country cannot thrive without the protecting power of England, where more broadcloths are disposed of in one year than Scotland uses in ten. The limbs of the sturdy hills and dales men seem to spurn all modes of human comfort; yet verily the love of ease and warmth to the body is the parent of all arts and improvement; and until that begins to be felt, we can have no hope of Scotland."

Anne looked up, and smiled at this professional allusion to the source of her father's wealth.

"But I need not so speak to the pretty Anne," he added, returning her smile; for I know that thou hast the fashionable womanish affection of these times for steel, as the commodity of man's apparel; and thereto appertaineth the subject of which I came to speak to thee. Our governor, William Oliphant—who, though a Scotchman, is as true an adherent of Edward as ever fought under the banner-borne bones of his father—wanteth a thousand Flemish nobles, to enable him to get provisions for our citizens from a Dutch galley in the Tay; and whom should he apply to for it but Peter of Ghent, who is looked upon as being the richest man of Perth?"

"And wilt thou give it him, father?" said Anne. "Of a surety, thou wilt lose it, if thou dost; for, were Perth as strong as Roxburgh, which, they say, is the strongest hold of these parts, it would not stand against such a warrior as Robert Bruce; and where wilt thou get thy money again, if the town falls into the hands of the Scots?"

"That is a good point of argument for a woman, love," replied Peter. "I fear for the old town myself; for they tell me that Bruce's fame has brought to his blue banner three French knights, with their left eyes bound up by ladies' favours, who deem that their feats of arms in an escalade of Perth may restore to them their sight. Doubtless they will fight like lions or devils; but seest thou not, that, whether I give the money or not, the town may fall, and all I have in the world may be wrenched from me by these naked caterans, to whom a single merk, albeit it were clipped to the dimensions of King David's bodles, would be a fortune?"

Anne was silent. The mention of the monoculous knights of France had driven merks and all other moneys from her mind, and she would have rejoiced to have seen

Perth taken upon the instant, provided always that she were taken with it. But Peter understood not her absence of mind, and resumed his argument, on the assumption that Anne was listening with all due attention to his scheme.

"But Peter of Ghent," he again said, "never gave a silver piece, or a woollen piece either, for nothing; and, if my dutiful Anne will enter into my scheme, she may have for her consort no less a man than William Oliphant himself, the Governor of Perth, and her wedding-dress shall be of the best silks of Nismes, the richest gloves of Grenoble, and sandals from the fair of Bocaire."

This announcement of some cunning purpose of her father filled Anne with alarm. Oliphant, a dissolute man, had been sometimes in the habit of calling at the house, and she had often thought that she herself was the object of his attraction. Her father, by mentioning the French knights that fought under the banner of Bruce, had raised a hope that her chevalier of the green riband was among them, and now he had caused an alarm that might have been read in her countenance.

"William Oliphant, the Governor of Perth," she replied, as she held down her face towards the blazing faggots, "will not surely stoop to marry the daughter of a Flemish merchant."

"Money will make any man stoop, fair Anne," replied Peter. "I have heard the back armour of the bravest knight of the lists crack with the bow to Mammon, as loud as when he knelt to the peacock. A merchant knows the science of provisos, and conditions, and stipulations, and never a Scotch plack will William Oliphant get from Peter of Ghent, but upon the condition that he wed my Anne, when the town is saved from the arms of Bruce and his blind knights, and the promised succours shall arrive from England. By Saint Dennis, we may have a jolly wedding

in the midst of our jubilee of liberation. What sayest, my love?"

Anne still hung down her head. She feared to oppose her father, who was indulgent to her, and had hitherto prided himself on her obedience. She was, besides, overcome with the conflicting thoughts that had been so suddenly raised in her mind by the mention of the French knights, and of this new purpose of her father, that seemed to destroy all the hopes she still entertained of one day enjoying the affections of the man who had first produced an effect upon her heart. A deep sigh escaped from her, and roused her father's suspicions of the cause of her silence.

"Speak, Anne," he said; "thou hast already captivated the governor by thy beauty, and my money will do the rest. He will be knighted by Edward, if he beat off the Bruce; and my daughter will be a lady."

"William Oliphant is not a man according to my heart, father," answered she, at last, with a trembling heart; "but might I be absolved from my engagement to marry him, if the town falls before the arms of the Scots?" she added, as she looked modestly and fearfully into his face.

"Most certainly, love," replied Peter; "and, moreover, thou shalt not be bound to Oliphant personally, for it is I that must make the condition that he will marry thee, in consideration of the loan I gave him for the good old town."

Well pleased with the dutiful answer he had got from his daughter, the worthy man of traffic sallied forth to meet, by special appointment, the governor, who anxiously waited for him in his residence. After he had gone forth, Anne bethought herself of what her fear of offending her father had wrung from her. Though timid from love and duty, she was of a noble spirit, and upheld her heart, as it recoiled from the thought of becoming the wife of a man she hated, by revolving in her mind the chances of the

gallant Scots forcing the town to surrender, and relieving her from her qualified obligation. She wished all success to the chivalrous Bruce, because she loved the character of him, and the great and enthusiastic spirits who were struggling for freedom; but she was filled with a high swelling hope, that burned in her bright eye, and heaved her bosom, that her chosen knight of the lists was among the three Frenchmen, who were undergoing their probation for the honours of chivalry. At that moment, her lover was in all probability at a very short distance from her—her lady-gift still bound the flowing hair of dark auburn she had seen and admired, as it escaped from beneath his helm; her power was still exercised in occluding one of the darkest and most brilliant eyes that ever peered through the warrior's visor, and the thought of her then sitting and dreaming of him was perhaps occupying his mind, and filling his heart. Then rose the thrilling thought, that, ere another week passed over, her own hands might be required to unbind the pledge, and the light of the eye that had so long been hid from the sun, might first be thrown upon the face of her who bound it. The hazards of a siege were despised by her bold spirit, as it contemplated these glowing visions. She feared nothing for either herself or her father from men who, while they fought like lions for their country's liberty, were actuated by the high and noble spirit of chivalry. Possessing that confidence in the generosity of noble hearts which seems to be natural to lovely women, she would throw herself on the protection of Bruce himself; claiming that, she could defy all danger, from whatever quarter it might come; and her request for safety to her father would be as successful as her petition for herself. In the siege and capture of the town, her best and dearest interests were involved; for she would contemplate the success of great men fighting in a cause she loved, she would have the chance of meeting her lover,

and she had the certainty of escaping the licentious Oliphant, who could not claim her, in the event of losing his treacherous cause in fighting against his country. The sounds of the clang of arms of the assailants would at that moment have been the sweetest sound she ever heard; and she drew deep sighs, as she contemplated the chances of their triumph.

Unconscious of the thoughts that were revolving in the excited mind of his daughter, Peter of Ghent walked along the streets of Perth, till he came to the residence of the governor. His mind was too much occupied on the subject of his diplomatic undertaking to allow him to notice the gazing burghers, who, from their windows, stared at the rich Fleming, and suspected that the object of his expedition was in some way connected with the perilous state of the town. He found the governor waiting for him; and, having made his bow, was soon seated by the official's fire.

"Well, Peter of Ghent," began Oliphant, "hast thou bethought thyself of my request—to give me the thousand nobles that are required for the support of the town against the arms of the Bruce, whose head deserveth a spear, alongside of that which upholdeth Wallace's on London Bridge, or whose body meriteth a cage, alongside of the Countess of Buchan's crib, in the Castle of Berwick. What sayest thou?"

"The sum thou mentionest, Sir Governor," replied the cunning burgher, "hath been laid apart for the tocher of Anne, who meriteth well of the good consideration thou hast bestowed on her. The marriage dower is a sacred gift. Dost thou think as well of her now as formerly?"

"Why, yes, Peter of Ghent, I do," replied Oliphant, who probably saw some obscure connection between Peter's sentences which the words themselves scarcely supplied. "No man with a heart could see that maiden once, and forget

her ever. Less beautiful women have been the cause of the meeting of bleeding heads and sawdust; and thou wilt not be far beyond the Saracen's head of thy suspicion, if thou deemest me a lover of fair Anne of Ghent."

"That I have had a fair cause to suspect," said Peter; "and I am well entitled to opine that Anne would give her consent to my paying the sum required of me, upon the consideration that it was merely a species of forcinstalment of dowery, given for the double purpose of saving the town and securing a governor of her heart. A man that can defend, so nobly as you have done, a walled city, could keep a woman's heart in good discipline."

"A right fair point of dialects, Peter of Ghent," replied Oliphant; "but we had better speak of concernments of love after the city is saved. Let us have the nobles in the meanwhile, and we will discuss the merits of the fair Anne, when we have time and leisure to appreciate the qualities of womankind."

"Well and veritably indited," said Peter; "but it would lubricate and facilitate the gaining of Anne's consent to the payment of this money, if I could report to her that it was to be paid as a matrimonial propine to the man she loveth; and, to be honest, I cannot, of a truth, pay it, but upon that stipulation."

"And, by the honour of a governor! I am well pleased to think that I am thus estimated by so fair a creature. Let us have the money; and, if all goes well with the town, I shall look for a second tocher, of another thousand, with the hand of thy daughter."

"Concluded, Sir Governor," cried Peter, in ecstasy.

And the two sat down to finish, over a bottle of Burgundy, the details of a bargain which, on one side, was, at least, sincere; but on the other, was deemed, by those who knew the faithless character of the man, of, at least, dubious faith. Whatever sincerity, however, was felt and exhibited

by Peter, in so far as concerned the governor, it was very clear that he had acted a part of true mercantile subtlety, in so far as regarded the interests of his fair daughter. Meanwhile, the money was paid, and extraordinary efforts were made by Oliphant to get foraging parties sent abroad, to procure, for the inhabitants, the necessary supplies. The motions of these troops, as well as those of the besiegers, were regularly noticed by Anne from a part of the wall to which she had access from her father's house. Her interest in the issue of the impending strife was the greatest that could be felt by woman; for it involved the dearest rights of her sex. Bound to Oliphant only in the event of his success, his defeat might bring to her the object of her affections, and she looked for every demonstration of activity on the part of Bruce as a sign of her coming liberation.

During these watchful operations of the fair Fleming, the soldiers of Bruce remained steady at their post, where they had already been for five weeks, endeavouring to prevent any supplies from being sent into the town. Their numbers as yet, however, were so few, and the fortifications of Perth so extensive, that a considerable portion of the ground surrounding the town was left under the surveillance of a species of riding patrole, which the indefatigable endeavours of Oliphant sometimes succeeded in enabling the purveyors to elude. A like good fortune did not attend some of those sent to turn the merks of Peter of Ghent into edibles; for several foragers were intercepted in their passage from the country to the besieged city. One of these—a person called Giles Mortimer—was taken before Bruce, and examined as to the state of the town's provisions.

"Well, sirrah, are these rebels still determined to hold out?" said the king.

"There are many murmurs in the town, sire," replied the man; "and were it not, as fame reporteth, that a rich citizen hath given the governor a thousand Flemish nobles,

on condition that he marry his daughter, I do believe that not another noble would have been wrung from any one in the whole city."

"And what is the name of this rich citizen?" said Bruce.

"How could it be any other than Peter of Ghent?" said the man, with a smile; "for is he not the richest citizen of Perth?"

"We have heard of this same Peter of Ghent," said Bruce; "and, by our crown, we should not be ill pleased to be present at the wedding of his daughter. We have some French knights here, who would dance merrily, in honour of the fair bride. What is her name?"

"Anne of Ghent she is called," replied the man; "and, by'r lady, she might, for the matter of beauty, be the wife of a king."

"And when is the wedding to be?" rejoined Bruce.

"When the governor can declare the town to be safe from the Bruce," replied the man.

"And that will be when the hares in the pass of Ben Cruachan are safe from the wolves of Lorn," replied Bruce, laughing, and looking around to his chiefs. "Now, look around you, sir, at these warriors, and after thou hast made a gauge of their numbers, and learned that every castle we have yet attempted hath fallen before us, go and tell William Oliphant that we intend to be present at his wedding with the fair Anne of Ghent, and cannot think of waiting either for the succours of King Edward, or for our own defeat. Hie thee on our message, sirrah."

The man was accordingly liberated; and Bruce, during that same day, having resolved to perform by stratagem what seemed to be impossible by the fair play of arms, took with him Sir James Douglas, and went to reconnoitre. Great and even marvellous as was the courage of these far-famed assertors of their country's freedom, it may be doubted whether their genius for daring and successful stratagem

did not excel the chivalrous spirit of fair-fighting by which they were actuated to perform deeds of arms that have made the whole world ring with their fame. The capture of the peel or castle of Linlithgow, and that of Edinburgh, afterwards performed, were the most cunningly-devised pieces of military stratagem that had ever been witnessed; and the work of old Polyænus on the warlike acts of the strategists of Greece exhibits nothing that can be compared to them. Bruce had already exhibited this talent for scheming, in the affairs of Lindon Hill and Cruachan Ben; but his powers in this respect were yet to be developed on a grander scale, and as it were by gradation, till the final triumph of Bannockburn should establish his fame for ever. The capture of Perth was one of those intermediate and probationary trials that were fitting the great master for that final and glorious display of all his talents for war; but, small as it was in comparison of what followed, it exhibited perhaps as much of his peculiar genius as had yet been shown. Accompanied by Sir James, he went, during the hours of twilight, up to the margin of the fosse.

"We must know the depth of this miniature Styx," he said to his companion.

"But we have no measuring-rods," replied Sir James.

"By thine own St Bride! we have though," replied Bruce, smiling. "I am six feet two inches in height." And, in an instant, he was up to the neck in the water; proceeding forward he reached the bottom of the wall, and satisfied himself that all the tall men of his army might make their way through the ditch without incurring the danger of being drowned. Having ascertained this, he returned to the camp, and having provided himself and his companion (for he avoided any show of men) with scaling-ladders of ropes, they again sallied forth under the shade of the increasing darkness, and reached the spot that had already been tested. With one of the ladders in his hand, he again plunged into

the water, and made a signal for Sir James to follow; but the knight wanted full two inches of the height of the king, and hesitated a moment, from a well-grounded suspicion that he would be overwhelmed. But shame mastered his scruples, and in an instant he was alongside of the king, who, however, required to seize and sustain him, to prevent his being taken off his feet by the power of the water, that was almost on a level with his lips. They paused a moment in this position, to listen if there were any sounds of stir on the walls, and, perceiving all quiet, they proceeded, and reached the bottom of the fortification. Sir James stood close to the wall, and Bruce, by the aid of some jutting stones, mounted upon his shoulders, remarking, with a quaint humour, that the knight required some weight to be placed upon him, to enable him to keep his erect position. In this strange attitude the king contrived to throw up and fix the ladders to the top of the first bartizan of the wall, and having tugged them with all his force, to ascertain their steadfastness, he came down, and was about to retrace his steps, when Sir James, who disdained to be behind even his king in feats of daring, seized the end of one of the ladders, and, mounting up, looked calmly over the top of the wall, and satisfied himself of two things—first, that the ladders were properly fixed; and, second, that their daring act had not been observed. Having descended, he was again laid hold of by the king; and they reached the bank, where they deliberately shook the water off them after the manner of water-spaniels, and returned to the camp.

Some of the heads of the army were informed of what had been done, and, next morning, after all the inhabitants of the town were astir, the clarion was sounded, loud and long, as if the city had been upon the instant to be attacked. The tents were struck; but, in place of an attack, a retreat was the order of the day, and in the course of an hour the whole Scottish host were beyond the sight of the inhabitants of

Perth. The intelligence was soon therefore circulated within the city, that Bruce had given up the siege, and had departed upon some expedition of less difficulty; and the friends of Edward rejoiced that they were liberated from so fearful a foe. The communication was received by many with great rejoicings; and a courier, who arrived that same day from England, announced that Edward had despatched succours to the city, which would arrive in the Tay nearly as soon as the messenger would reach the end of his journey. To Peter of Ghent, this change of circumstances was the apparent prelude to the honours he expected to be showered upon his daughter; but Anne herself, dreaming still of her monoculous knight, and of her anticipated delivery by the champions she desired so ardently to see, looked forward with fear and trembling to the sacrifice that seemed to await her. Her watching at the city walls had been persevered in; but all her care and perspicacity had not enabled her to perceive the strange act of Bruce in suspending the ladder before sounding a retreat. The guarding of the walls was in some degree relaxed, and the inhabitants began again to go forth, and engage in their avocations. About three days afterwards, the handmaid of the fair Fleming, who was in the secret of her mistress, informed her that, as she returned from a meeting near the fortifications with her lover, a soldier, she had observed the top of a rope-ladder affixed to the lower bartizan of the west wall; but the girl's information ended with the announcement of the fact, for her simple mind had suggested no explanation of the circumstance. But to Anne's quick thought the communication presented an aspect pregnant of hope; and, having cautioned the maiden against speaking of what she had seen to any of the inhabitants, she sallied forth in the light of the moon, and by the directions of her informant soon came to the spot where the ladder was suspended. A train of reflections opened up to her the scheme of Bruce, who had, as she

thought, raised the siege, to lull the inhabitants into a security which he might turn to his advantage. By some bold efforts, she reached the part of the wall to which the instrument of escalade was attached, and, in the height of her enthusiasm, she took from her dress a narrow riband, and bound it to the top of the ropes.

"The design of these bold spirits," she said, "shall not lack the inspiring gift of a woman to hail, as that favour streameth in the wind, the success of the cause that giveth freedom to their country. If Rolande de Leon may not see this, the eyes of Bruce, that are unbound, may catch a sight of the trophy; and what better evidence may he have that Anne of Ghent wisheth him triumph?"

After indulging in her short monologue, she retreated from the wall, and with some difficulty escaped the eyes of some of the neighbouring guards, as she sought with quick steps the house of her father. As she entered, Peter of Ghent looked at her as if he would have questioned her as to where she had been at so late an hour; but his mind was too much occupied by matters of greater moment.

"Welcome, my love," said he to her, as she sat down by the fire. "I have been with the governor, who is full of rejoicing at this unexpected quittance of the Bruce and his host of wolves. The period of the fulfilment of our condition approaches. The succours of Edward are expected every hour; and then, Anne, I have a right to claim for thee a lord, who is worthy of thy beauty and thy goodness."

"The Bruce may return, father," replied Anne. "It is not thus that he resigns his prey."

"That is nothing to thee or to me, Anne," said Peter, somewhat roused. "A knighthood will be the more sure to the governor; and I should like as well to see that honour bestowed on thy husband as on thy betrothed. Get ready thy marriage-gear, love, and lay aside thy maiden blushes,

which can aid thee as little in capturing a husband, as Bruce's backwardness in the taking of Perth."

"The governor hath not claimed me, father," replied Anne, hesitatingly. "He hath not called here since the money was paid to him."

"More still of thy doubtful questionings, wench!" cried Peter, rising in his anger. "What is his remissness to thee, if I adhere to my condition, and demand my bond? He is bound by his honour; to-morrow he is to be here, and thou must show thy fairest qualities in his presence. Go and assign thee thy appurtenances and paraphernals."

Anne rose silently and left the room; but it was not to obey her father. Her mind was occupied with meditations on the chances of the return of Bruce, upon which her safety from the arms of Oliphant, and her hope of meeting her French knight, depended. Her calculations of the probability of that event were but the operations of her own unaided mind, and misgivings, ushering in painful fears, vindicated a place in her thoughts, and made her alternately the victim of hope and apprehension. She could not retire to rest, and her devotions before the Holy Virgin were performed with a fluttering heart, that shook off the holy feelings with which she was accustomed to kneel before the sacred image. The moon still shone bright in at the window, and the stillness that reigned within the house told her that the inmates had retired to rest. She felt a strong inclination to go forth, and find that relief which is often experienced by troubled spirits, in the calm beams of the queen of night; and, wrapping around her a mantle, she obeyed the impulse of her feelings. A large garden nearly connected the house with a part of the fortifications; and, having perambulated the open space, she sauntered along till she came to an embrasure, at which she set herself down, and fixed her eyes on the surrounding ground, where she had formerly seen a part of Bruce's besieging

forces. She could perceive nothing now but the wide plain spread forth in the silver light of the moon, and below her feet the deep fosse which reflected the bright beams from its quiet surface. The wind was hushed, and an unbroken silence seemed to reign throughout all nature. A deep train of meditations took possession of her mind; and the sublimed feelings that were called forth by the still and solemn silence around her, mixed with and lent an influence to the thoughts that were ever and anon busy with the hopes that had not yet forsaken her breast. As she sat thus meditating, she thought she observed a dark mass of some moving body upon the plain beyond; and, as she gazed, her attention became more and more fixed upon the extraordinary appearance.

In a short time, the dense mass became more perceptible, and she could now distinguish that it was composed of a body of men, whose motion forward was so noiseless that scarcely a single sound met her ear. There was a small body somewhat in advance of the rest, and she now saw that the direction which they held was towards the spot where she had seen the instrument of escalade fixed to the wall. Rising hurriedly, she crept along by the covered way, and was surprised to find that her passage was not interrupted by a single guard, the men having, in consequence of the fatigue to which they had been exposed for five weeks, taken advantage of Bruce's retreat, and betaken themselves to rest. She soon arrived at the spot, and about the same time she observed that the van she had noticed had also got to that part of the fosse opposite to where she was now placed. The silence enabled her now to catch the low tones of the men; and the corruscations of their steel armour, as the moonbeams played upon it, met her eye. She hesitated a moment whether she would remain or retreat; for the terrors of a siege were before her, and her father was in danger; but she felt that her own freedom

from a hated union depended upon the success of the besiegers, and the workings of an enthusiastic spirit stilled the whisperings of fear. She bent and listened, for articulate sentences now rose from the warriors, who stood for a moment on the brink of the fosse. A gigantic individual, in full mail, stood in the midst of the group, and he could be no other than Bruce himself, whose height exceeded that of most men of his day.

"Art ready?" said he, as he held forth his spear, the point of which glittered in the moonbeams, as he waved it.

"Ay—on, noble king!" was responded by another behind him.

"Come on, then," again said the former, and immediately he dashed into the water, which seemed to cover his body to the head.

Some of the others appeared to hesitate for a moment.

"What shall we say of our French lords," cried another, in a French accent, "who live at home in the midst of wassail and jollity, when so brave a knight is here putting his life in hazard to win a hamlet?" And he was the second that followed the Bruce.

"Shall a Frenchman, who hath not yet redeemed the sight of his left eye, bound by a lady's pledge, be the second to mount the wall," was said by a third, as he rushed forward. In an instant the whole party were in the water.

Bruce was now on the ladder. He stopped suddenly, and gazed for a moment at the riband on the top of the escalade. Anne's voice met his ear.

"Come on, come on, brave warriors," she said, in a low tone.

"Who art thou, in Heaven's name?" replied he.

"Anne of Ghent, thy friend. The guard is asleep, and the governor deemeth thee far away. I claim indemnity in life and limb to Peter of Ghent."

"Granted, noble damsel, by the sword of Bruce!" was the answer; "away—away!—to a place of safety."

Anne lost no time in obeying the command. She flew along the covered way with the quickness of light. In her speed she stumbled on the feet of a soldier who lay in a recess of the ramparts, and was almost precipitated to the ground. The man looked up in agitation, and, seeing that it was a woman, growled out a few incoherent sentences, and again resigned himself to sleep, from which he might awake only to feel the sharp steel of a Scotch dagger, as it sought his heart. She paused a little, to satisfy herself that the man was not sufficiently roused to hear the sounds of the assailants, and, finding all safe, she sought hurriedly the dwelling of her father. He was sound asleep when she entered, and there was no one stirring; but the sounds of horns were now ringing through the city, and, as she opened the door of his sleeping-apartment, the clamour roused him. Starting to his feet, he called out to Anne to know the cause of the disturbance.

"The Bruce is in the act of storming the city, father," she said.

"Then are the dreams of my ambition finished," replied Peter; "and we shall be the marks for the vengeance of these savages. I have no chance of escape. My money is gone, and the reward that will be given for it will be death."

"Fear not, father," said Anne, calmly; "thou art safe."

"Peter of Ghent," replied he, "who hath furnished money for the support of the city, will be among the first objects of the vengeance of the Bruce. Ha! I hear already the groans of the dying. Whither shall I fly, or where shall I conceal myself?"

"Thou canst be safe only in this house," said Anne. "The Bruce hath, by his sword, pledged his faith to me that Peter of Ghent shall be safe in life and limb."

"What meaneth the damsel's strange words?" cried the father. "Art thou mad? Where couldst thou have seen the Bruce?"

"Concern not thyself for that, father," replied she, with the same unperturbed air. "Thou art safe. The Bruce hath said it."

Peter looked at his daughter in blank wonder; and, as the sounds of horns, the clashing of swords, and the screams of the dying met his ear, he trembled and seemed irresolute whether he should repose faith in her words, or take means for his safety. A loud noise now approached the house; the door was burst open, and three naked caterans entered the apartment, with bloodstained swords gleaming in their hands. One of them rushed forwards, and, seizing Peter, was on the point of thrusting the weapon into his bosom.

"He is safe by the word of the Bruce," ejaculated Anne, as she rushed between the soldier and her father.

"His name, then?" cried one of the soldiers behind.

"Peter of Ghent," answered Anne.

The sword of the soldier was dropped in an instant.

"To pe sure he will pe safe if that pe his name," said the man, with a grim smile. "To prince has said it. Here, Tuncan, guard this maiden and her father, while I and Tonald will pe after sending te neebours to their lang hames."

With these words the two caterans left the house, and joined the other soldiers who were careering through the city, and slaying every Anglicised Scot that came in their way. The guard Duncan remained in Peter's house, and sat with grim majesty, surveying in silence the terrified Fleming, who was lost in wonder at what he had seen and heard; for everything appeared to him a mystery. Others of the soldiers burst at intervals into the house, with the intent to slay the inmates; but Duncan silenced them all by the watchword, "Peter of Ghent," and at every demonstration of the charm the worthy burgher seemed more and more surprised. He questioned Anne as to the meaning of the strange effect of his name and of the unlooked-for security that it afforded to him who deserved death more than

any one in the city, except the governor himself. But he got small satisfaction from the maiden, for she felt that it was impossible for her to explain the part she acted, without incurring the charge that she had been untrue to the cause of her father, and the rights of the governor and the king. Neither would Duncan give him any information but what tended rather to increase the mystery; for he merely said that it was the command of the Bruce that Peter of Ghent should be saved from the general massacre, and guarded safely from the fury of the soldiers by the first man that entered his house. In the midst of this mystery, a suspicion took possession of him, that Bruce wished to save him for a more cruel death, after the siege should be ended; and, notwithstanding of all that Anne could say to him to calm his fears, he still retained doggedly the apprehension, and sighed bitterly as he contemplated his expected fate.

"Thou hast given me no reason, girl," he whispered to her, "to satisfy me that I am not reserved for the heading-block. Bruce hath, of a verity, heard of the money I lent to the governor, and thou shalt by and by mourn the death of thy father. But what didst thou mean, Anne, by thy statement to the soldier, that I was safe by the word of the Bruce? Was it a device of thy quick fancy to save me from the sword of that man, who weareth no broadcloth on his body, and whose limbs are, of a consequence, as hard as his heart?"

"If thou wilt stand by thy pledge, father," answered Anne, "that I shall not be required to marry Oliphant, now that the city is taken, I will pledge a simple damsel's word that thou shalt be as safe from the headsman's falchion as thou art from the broadsword of that wild man, whose bare limbs terrify me more than the bright steel of the Bruce."

"Of a surety I will stand by my pledge, girl; but I can-

not rest satisfied till I hear thy reason for the confidence thou reposest in the clemency of the Scottish leader, whose name is a terror to every enemy of his country."

"Nay, father, I am now trafficking with thee—driving a bargain, as thou sayest," replied she, with a smile, which the still terrified Fleming could not for the soul of him understand. "The bargain is concluded, and I cannot, for my honour, say more, even to my father."

"Tell me, man," cried Peter, to the Highlander, who still stood guarding the door, with the drawn sword in his hand —"tell me, since my daughter will not, what the Bruce intendeth to do with Peter of Ghent, whose name hath operated as a charm on thy ear?"

"Hoigh, hoigh, man!" replied Duncan; "ye'll pe trying to get secrets oot o' Tuncan Thu Mohr."

"I will give thee money, my brave preserver," rejoined Peter, as he ran forward. "Let me escape, and I will reward thee with ten nobles. Here they are—see, see—it is meet thou shouldst have them, seeing thou wilt get no share of the spoils of the city."

"Keep him securely," whispered Anne, in the ear of the Highlander, "and I will reward thee better on the morrow."

"Thou art mad, Anne. What means the rebellious wench?" cried Peter, angrily. "Thou hast become a trafficker with the enemies of thy father. Henceforth I have no faith in thee. Wilt thou not let me free, good Master Mohr?"

Duncan turned, and looked knowingly at Anne, who, he probably thought, was wishing to torment the old merchant.

"To pe surely, she will pe keeping her prisoner," said he, in aid of the imputed design of the fair accomplice, and with a twinkle in his eye. "Te auld merchant's head will pe worth more than te ten nobles, she will pe thinking."

"Dost thou not hear, Anne, that I am, as I suspected, doomed to lay my head on the block?" cried Peter again. "Thou hast apparently some power over the savage," he added, in a whisper; "aid me in bribing him, and we may yet escape to Flanders, with my wealth, otherwise thou wilt lose thy dowery, and I my head."

"I have told thee that thou art safe, and thou wilt not listen to me," replied she. "Thou oughtst to be thankful for thy condition. Hearest thou not the groans of the dying citizens amidst the loud clang of arms? Thousands are now dying, and thou hast a royal guard to save thee from harm; yet art thou grumbling at thy fate!"

During all this time, the work of destruction had been going on in all parts of the city. Bruce was well aware that the great evil he had to cure could only be overcome by extreme measures, and the better feelings of his nature had for a time given place to the thirst for vengeance for the many wrongs he had suffered from the tyrants, who had not only ruined the country, but stained his domestic hearth with the cruelties of persecution. He gave orders, on entering the city, that every Scot that had favoured Edward should die; and his command was but too literally obeyed —thousands on that night felt, in the pangs of death, the effects of his dreadful retaliation. When the day dawned, he collected his captains in the court hall of the city, for the purpose of issuing ordinances of confiscation, settling the terms on which the city should in future be held, and passing sentence on the governor, who had been taken alive, and stood in the hall bound in chains. Bruce sat in the chair of office, his captains were ranged around him, and by his left side sat two of the French squires already spoken of, who had trusted to the events of that siege for getting the leave of the bravest knights of these times to remove the bandages from their left eyes, and be declared entitled to the rights and honours of chivalry. The scene

presented one of the most extraordinary aspects of these times of war and bloodshed. Bruce himself had fought hand to hand with the officers of the garrison, and slain every one who dared to withstand his terrible onset. His face and hands were covered with blood; his bright armour was stained; and the sword which he still held in his hand bore evidence to the work of deadly execution it had done against Scotland's foes. Sir James Douglas, Randolph, and others of the fiercest of his captains, bore the same grim aspect; and the French squires exhibited by their gore-stained shields that they merited the reward for which they looked, from the honour-dispensing sword of the king.

At a table before the king, there sat a man habited as a clerk, with a black cloak over his shoulders, and a small felt cap, that covered the crown of his head. He was busy calling forth the names of the inhabitants who had adhered to the cause of Edward; and, as he repeated them, the king awarded his fiat of confiscation of the effects of the individuals. As the man proceeded, he came to the name of Peter of Ghent, and Bruce paused. The recollections of Anne and her father had been, by the turmoils of the siege, for some time absent from his mind; but now his face glowed as the adventure of the preceding night flashed upon him, and the heroic conduct of the maiden was appreciated in the triumph he was now enjoying. He thought for a moment, and remembered that it was she who was to have been wedded to the governor. He could not account for the apparent contradiction between this purpose and the conduct of the girl in hailing him on to the siege of the city; but his quick mind at once suggested the solution that she had been hostile to the match, and that it had been projected merely by her father as a part of the transactions of the loan that had been given for the support of the city.

"Let Peter of Ghent and his fair daughter Anne be called to our presence," cried the king. And in a short time the wealthy Fleming, with Anne, who was covered with a deep veil, was led forwards in the midst of the assembled chiefs. It was apparent, from Peter's manner, that he was still actuated by the fear of punishment, for he trembled and shook all over, while Anne, looking at him with side-glances from beneath her veil, seemed to contemplate him with a mixed feeling of pity and good-humour. Bruce, who was anxious to see the face of the maiden who had acted so noble and fearless a part, would have requested her to lift her veil; but the high-bred feelings inculcated by the peculiar formula of knighthood induced him to wait till he could accomplish the object of his wish after the legitimate manner of the chevaliers. Turning to the trembling culprit, he raised his voice to the highest pitch.

"What does that inhabitant of old Scotland deserve," he said, as he fixed his eyes on Peter, "who giveth his means in aid of rebellion against his crowned king? Answer us, Peter of Ghent, according to the estimate thou formest of thine own act, in giving to Mr Oliphant, governor of our city, the money wherewith he endeavoured to resist our authority."

Peter was silent, for he was now satisfied that he had been spared to be reserved for the gallows or the heading-axe.

"Speak, sirrah!" cried the Bruce, assuming a more stern tone of authority.

"What it merited in the mind of Scotland's lawful king," replied Peter, at length; "but spare the old father for the sake of his child, and what is left of my substance shall go to support the crown, which a king's leniency to repentant subjects renders the more lustrous.

"Flattery is no atonement for rebellion," thundered out Bruce.

"God have mercy upon me!" cried Peter of Ghent. "Thou knowest, my liege, that I had no power to resist the command of the governor, when he demanded of me a thousand nobles; nor could I resist thy higher authority, wert thou to ask of me to lay another thousand at this moment at thy royal feet."

"Thou wouldst now even bargain for thy head, as thou didst for the marriage of thy fair daughter," cried Bruce. "Is it not true, sir, that thou didst sell the maiden to the traitor Oliphant?"

"It is even true that I did make it a condition of the advance of the thousand nobles, that he should fulfil the intentions he had manifested towards my daughter; yet I was not the less necessitated to give the money, seeing it would have been taken from me otherwise."

"Then what does the man merit who sells his daughter for the liberties of the country by whose industry and means he liveth?" replied the king. "I put it to the nobles here assembled."

"The heading-block—the heading-block," resounded in hoarse groans through the hall.

"Will she not yet throw off her veil?" muttered the king, as he cast his eyes on Anne.

"Lead Peter of Ghent to the block," he cried aloud.

Anne threw back her veil, and, with her face uncovered, cast herself at the feet of Bruce. The assembled lords fixed their eyes upon the damsel, as she occupied a position which exhibited the graces of her perfect figure, and the intelligence of her beautiful face lighted up with feelings which moved the hearts of the sternest warriors around. They were struck with the full blaze of a beauty that was not excelled by the fairest woman of Scotland in her day, and whispers went round among them that told eloquently the effect she had produced by the sudden display of her charms.

"Is this the reward, my liege," she said, in a clear, tuneful voice, "that is due to me for my humble efforts in behalf of the success of thine arms? Is this the faith of the Bruce, whose name has filled the nations as the trumpet resounds within the palisades when honour is to be sought and won?"

A smile played upon the face of the king. The quick, dark eye of the maiden searched his heart, and was satisfied. A m ntling blush, accompanied by a smile that seemed to respond to the humour of the king, enhanced her beauty, and showed that she understood the play that was enacted by the noble monarch.

"It is the privilege of beauty," said the king, still smiling, "to inspire its possessor with an unshaken faith in the sanctions of the brave. We are not oblivious, fair Anne of Ghent, of our promise, as this will testify." And he undid her own riband from his arm, and put it around the neck of the supplicant. "The colour of this streamer shall afterwards be that of the banner of Perth. Thy father is safe in life and limb; but tell us, fair damsel, what other method could we have adopted, to gratifiy our sense of justice and our love of beauty, than to show thy father that he owes his safety to thee, and to make thee throw off the veil that concealeth so fair a face?"

At this moment, one of the French squires, with his left eye bound up by a green riband, advanced to the feet of the king, and stood for a moment surveying the countenance of the supplicant.

"By the patron saint of the house of Leon," cried the Frenchman, "it is my fair queen of the lists! Knowest thou this silken band, lady, by which my left orb is occluded, and my affections bound to the giver?"

"If thou art Rolande de Leon," said Anne, as she rose, by the hand of the king, "thou canst tell if that gift was bestowed by my hands. To that valiant squire, Anne of

Ghent did once award the humble pledge of a silken band, which was to remain on his temples till he achieved a feat of arms."

"Ha, well timed!" cried Bruce. "Hear the command of thy liege sovereign. We command Anne of Ghent to give the light of heaven to that occluded organ, which is so well entitled to see the glitter of the sword of knighthood, and the charms of her who restores it to its natural rights."

Anne proceeded, amidst the applause of the lords, to obey the commands of the king. With a firm hand, but a palpitating heart, she undid the bandage, as the Frenchman knelt at her feet.

"Rise not yet," said Bruce, when he saw the operation concluded; and, taking his sword, he touched the back of the squire, and pronounced the words, "Rise, Sir Rolande de Leon, one of the bravest knights that it has been our good fortune to see fighting under the blue banner of Scotland."

The knight rose, amidst the acclamation of the nobles. The clerk again proceeded with his monotonous vocation of calling out the names of the citizens. Peter, with his daughter, accompanied by Sir Rolande, left the court-room, and proceeded to his house, where, after proper explanations, the Fleming saw no reason to regret the taking of the city. On that same day, William Oliphant was beheaded. The town was quickly restored to order; and, before Bruce's army again set out on a new expedition, Anne of Ghent became the lady of Sir Rolande de Leon.

This brave knight accompanied Bruce through all his engagements, taking frequent opportunities, throughout the wars, of stealing a few days of the society of his fair Anne of Ghent. In a short time he was covered with honours; and, by the end of Scotland's period of direst strife and danger, old Peter of Ghent died, leaving a large

fortune to his daughter. The couple, we have reason to believe, retired afterwards to a castle somewhere in Perthshire, to enjoy the peace and happiness of a domestic life, after so many toils and dangers. We have somewhere seen the arms afterwards adopted by the knight, in which *three Lioncels rampant topaz* figure on a *field sapphire*, *crest*, wreathed with a *riband vert*. The wreath we may easily understand; nor can we be at any loss for the derivation of the young Lions, seeing that, according to our authority, Anne bore Sir Rolande three sons, whose descendants, under the name of Lion, long lived in Perthshire; and, if we are not led astray by old writs, they afterwards intermarried with the Lions of Strathmore.

THE PROFESSOR'S TALES.

PEAT-CASTING TIME.

In the olden times, there were certain fixed occasions when labour and frolic went hand in hand—when professional duty and kindhearted glee mutually kissed each other. The "rocking" mentioned by Burns—

"On Fastening's E'en we had a rocking"—

I still see in the dim and hazy distance of the past. It is only under the refractive medium of vigorous recollection that I can again bring up to view (as the Witch of Endor did Samuel) those images that have been reposing, "'midst the wreck of things that were," for more than fifty years. Yet my early boyhood was familiar with these social senile and juvenile festivities. *There* still sits Janet Smith, in her toy-mutch and check-apron, projecting at intervals the well-filled spindle into the distance. Beside her is Isabel Kirk, elongating and twirling the yet unwound thread. Nanny Nivison occupies a *creepy* on the further side of the fire (making the third Fate!), with her shears. Around, and on bedsides, are seated Lizzy Gibson, with her favoured lad; Tam Kirkpatrick, with his jo Jean on his knee; Rob Paton the stirk-herd; and your humble servant. And "now the crack gaes round, and who so wilful as to put it by?" The story of past times; the report of recent love-matches and miscarriages; the gleeful song, bursting unbid from the young heart, swelling forth in beauty and in brightness like the waters from the rock of Meribah; the occasional female remonstrance against certain *welcome* impertinences, in shape of, "Come now, Tam—nane o' yer nonsense." "Will! I say, be peaceable, and behave yersel afore folk. 'Od, ye'll squeeze the very breath out o' a body."

"Till, in a social glass o' strunt,
They parted off careering
On sic a night."

"Ye've heard a lilting at our ewes-milking."

How few of the present generation have ever heard of this "lilting," except in song. It is the gayest and sunniest season of the year. The young lambs, in their sportive whiteness, are coursing it, and bleating it, responsive to their dams, on the hill above. The old ewes on the plain are marching—

"The labour much of man and dog"—

to the pen or fold. The response to the clear-toned bleat of their woolly progeny is given, anon and anon, in a short, broken, low bass. It is the raven conversing with the jackdaw! All is bustle, excitement, and badinage.

"Weer up that ewe, Jenny, lass. Wha kens but her woo may yet be a blanket for you and ye ken wha to sleep in!"

"Haud yer tongue, Tammie, and gang hame to yer books and yer schoolin. Troth, it will be twa days ere the craws dirty your kirk riggin!"

Wouf, wouf, wouf!—hee, hee, hee!—hoch, hoch, hoch!—there *in* they go, and *in* they are, their horny heads wedged over each other, and a trio of stout, well-made damsels, with petticoats tied up "*à la breeches*," tugging away at their well-filled dugs.

"Troth, Jenny, that ewe will waur ye; 'od I think ye hae gotten haud o' the auld tup himsel. He's as powerfu, let me tell ye, as auld Francie, wham ye kissed sae snug last nicht ayont the peat-mou."

"Troth, at weel, Tam, ye're a fearfu liar. They wad be fonder than I am o' cock birds wha wad gie tippence for the stite o' a howlet."

"Howlet here, howlet there, Jenny, ye ken weel his auld brass will buy you a new pan."

At this crisis the crack becomes general and inaudible

from its universality, mixed as it is with the bleating of ewes, the barking of dogs, together with the singing of herd-laddies and of your humble servant.

Harvest is a blithe time! May all the charms of "Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on him" who shall first invent a reaping-machine! The best of all reaping-machines is "the human *arm* divine," whether brawny or muscular, or soft and rounded. The old woman of sixty sits all year long at her domestic occupations—you would deem her incapable of any out-door exertions; but, at the sound of the harvest-horn, she renews her youth, and sallies forth into the harvest-field, with hook over shoulder, and a heart buoyant with the spirit of the season, to take her place and drive her rig with the youngest there. The half-grown boy and girl of fourteen are mingled up in duty and in frolic, in jest and jibe, and jeer and laugh, with the stoutest and the most matured. Mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, and, above and beyond all, "lads and lasses, lovers gay!" mix and mingle in one united band, for honest labour and exquisite enjoyment; and when at last the joyous kirn is won —when the maiden of straw is borne aloft and in triumph, to adorn for twelve months the wall of the farmer's ben—when the rich and cooling curds-and-cream have been ram-horn-spooned into as many mouths as there are persons in the "toun"—then comes the mighty and long-anticipated festival, the roasted ox, the stewed sheep, the big pot enriched with the cheering and elevating draught, the punch dealt about in ladles and in jugs, the inspiring fiddle, the maddening reel, and the Highland fling.

> "*We* cannot but remember such things were,
> And were most dear to us!"

Hay harvest, too, had its soft and delicate tints, resembling those of the grain harvest. As the upper rainbow curves and glows with fainter colouring around the interior and the brighter, so did the hay harvest of yore anticipate and pre-

figure, as it were, the other. The hay tedded to the sun; the barefooted lass, her locks floating in the breeze, her cheeks redolent of youth, and her eyes of joy, scattering or collecting, carting or ricking, the sweetly-scented meadow produce, under a June sun and a blue sky!

"Oh, to feel as I have felt,
Or be what I have been!"

The favoured lover, namely, of that youthful purity, now in its fourteenth summer—myself as pure and all unthinking of aught but affection the most intense, and feelings the most soft and unaccountable.

"Ah, little did thy mother think,
That day she cradled thee,
What lands thou hadst to travel in,
What death thou hadst to dee!"

Poor Jeanie Johnston! I have seen her, only a few weeks ago, during the sittings of the General Assembly, sunk in poverty, emaciated by disease, the wife of an old soldier, himself disabled from work, tenanting a dark hovel in Pipe's Close, Castlehill of Edinburgh.

In the upper district of Dumfries-shire—the land of my birth, and of all those early associations which cling to me as the mistletoe to the oak, and which are equally hallowed with that druidical excrescence—there are no coals, but a superabundance of moss; consequently peat-fires *are* very *generally* still, and *were*, at the time of which I speak, *universally*, made use of; and a peat-fire, on a cold, frosty night of winter, when every star is glinting and goggling through the blue, or when the tempest raves, and

"There's no a star in a' the cary,"

is by no means to be despised. To be sure, it is short-lived—but then it kindles soon; it does not, it is true, entertain us with fantastic and playful jets of flame—but then its light is full, united, and steady; the heat which it sends

out on all sides is superior to that of coals. Wood is sullen and sulky, whether in its log or faggot form. It eats away into itself, in a cancer ignition. But the blazing peat—

"The bleezing ingle, and the clean hearth-stane"—

is the very soul of cheerfulness and comfort. But then peats must be prepared. They do not grow in hedges, nor vegetate in meadows. They must be cut from the black and consolidated moss; and a peculiarly-constructed spade, with a sharp edge and crooked ear, must be made use of for that purpose; and into the field of operation must be brought, at casting-time, the spademen, with their spades; and the barrowmen, and women, boys, and girls, with their barrows; and the breakfast sowans, with their creamy milk, cut and crossed into circles and squares; and the dinner stew, with its sappy potatoes and gusty-onioned mutton fragments; and the rest at noon, with its active sports and feats of agility, and, in particular, with its jumps from the moss-brow into the soft, marshy substance beneath—and *thereby hangs my tale*, which shall be as short and simple as possible.

One of the loveliest visions of my boyhood is Nancy Morrison. She was a year or so older than me; but we went and returned from school together. She was the only daughter of a poor widow woman, who supported herself, in a romantic glen on the skirts of the Queensberry Hills, by bleaching or whitening webs. In those days, the alkalis and acids had not yet superseded the slower progress of whitening green linen by soap-boiling, tramping, and alternate drying in the sun, and wetting with pure running water. Many is the time and oft that Nanny and I have wielded the watering-pan, in this fairy, sunny glen, all day long. Whilst the humble-bee boomed past us, the mavis occupied the thorn-tree, and the mother of Nanny employed herself in some more laborious department of the same pro-

cess, Nanny and I have set us down on the greensward—*in tenaci gramine*—played at chucks, "head him and cross him," or some such amusement. At school, Nanny had ever a faithful defender and avenger in me; and I have even purloined apples and gooseberries from the castle garden—and all for the love I bore "to my Nanny, oh!"

I know not that any one has rightly described a first love. It is not the love of man and woman, though that be fervent and terrible—it is not the love of mere boy and girlhood, though that be disinterested and engrossing—but it is the love of the period of life which unites the two. "Is there a man whose blood is warm within him" who does not recollect it? Is there a woman who has passed through the novitiate of fifteen, who has not still a distinct impression of the feeling of which I speak. It is not sexual, and yet it can only exist betwixt the sexes. It is the sweetest delusion under which the soul of a created being can pass. It is modest, timid, retiring, bashful; yet, in absence of the adored—in seclusion, in meditation, and in dreams—it is bold, resolute, and determined. There is no plan, no design, no right conception of *cause;* yet the *effect* is sure and the bliss perfect. Oh, for one hour—one little hour—from the thousands which I have idled, sported, dreamed away in the company of my darling school-companion, Nancy!

Will Mather was about two years older than Nancy—a fine youth, attending the same school, and evidently an admirer of Nancy. Mine was the love of comparative boyhood; but his was a passion gradually ripening (as the charms of Nancy budded into womanhood) into a manly and matrimonial feeling. I loved the girl merely as such—his eye, his heart, his whole soul were in his future bride. Marriage in no shape ever entered into my computations; but his eager look and heaving bosom bespoke the definite purpose—he anticipated felicity. I don't know exactly why, but I was never jealous of Will Mather—we were com-

panions; and he was high-souled and generous, and stood my friend in many perilous quarrels. I knew that *my* pathway in life was to be afar from that in which Nancy and Will were likely to walk; and I felt in my heart that, dear as this beautiful rosebud was to me, I was not *man* enough—I was not *peasant* enough to wear it in my bosom. Had Nancy on any occasion turned round to be kissed by me, I would have fled over muir and dale, to avoid her presence—and yet I had often a great desire to obtain that favour. Once indeed, and only once, did I obtain, or rather steal it. She was sitting beside a bird's nest, the young ones of which she was feeding and cherishing—for the parent birds, by the rapacity of a cat, had recently perished. As the little bills were expanding to receive their food, her countenance beamed with pity and benevolence. I never saw even *her* so lovely—so, in a moment, I had her round the neck, and clung to her lips with the tenacity of a creature drowning. But, feeling at once the awkwardness of my position, I took to my heels, becoming immediately invisible amidst the surrounding brushwood.

Such was "Will Mather," and such was "Nancy Morrison" at the period of which I am speaking. We must now advance about two or three years in our chronology, and find Will possessed of a piece of information which bore materially on his future fortunes. Will was an illegitimate child. His mother had kept the secret so well that he did not know his father, though he had frequently urged her to reveal to him privately all that she knew of his parentage. In conversing, too, with Nancy, his now affianced bride, he had expressed similar wishes; whilst she, with a becoming and feminine modesty, had urged him not to press an aged parent on so delicate a point. At last the old woman was taken seriously ill, and, on her death-bed and at midnight, revealed to her son the secret of his birth. He was the son of a proprietor in the parish, and a much-re-

spected man. The youth, so soon as he had closed his mother's eyes, hurried off, amidst the darkness, to the abode of his father, and, entering by a window, was in his father's bedchamber and over his body ere he was fully awake.

"John Scott!" said the son, in a firm and terrible tone, grasping his parent meantime convulsively round the neck —"John Scott of Auchincleuch, *I am thy son!*"

The conscience-stricken culprit, being taken by surprise, and almost imagining this a supernatural intimation from heaven, exclaimed, in trembling accents—

"But who are you that makes this averment?"

"I am thy son, father—oh, I am thy son!"

Will could no more; for his heart was full, and his tears dropped hot and heavy on a father's face.

"Yes," replied the parent, after a convulsive solemn sob —(O Heaven! thou art just!)—"yes, thou *art* indeed my son—my long-denied and ill-used boy—whom the fear of the world's scorn has tempted me, against all the yearnings of my better nature, to use so unjustly. But come to my bosom—to a father's bosom *now*, for I know that voice too well to distrust thee."

In a few months after this interesting disclosure, John Scott was numbered with his fathers, and Will Scott (no longer Mather) became Laird of Auchincleuch.

Poor Nancy was at first somewhat distressed at this discovery, which put her betrothed in a position to expect a higher or genteeler match. But there was no cause of alarm. Will was true to the back-bone, and would as soon have burned his Bible as have sacrificed his future bride. After much pressing for an early day on the part of the lover, it was agreed, at last, that the marriage should take place at "Peat-casting Time," and that Nancy should, for the last turn, assist at the casting of her mother's peats.

I wish I could stop here, or at least proceed to give you

an account of the happy nuptials of Will Scott and Nancy Morrison, the handsomest couple in the parish of Closeburn. But it may not be! These eyes, which are still filled (though it is forty-eight years since) with tears, and this pen, which trembles as I proceed, must attest and record the catastrophe.

Nancy, the beautiful bride, and I (for I was now on the point of leaving school for college) agreed to have a jump for the last time (often had we jumped before) from a suitable moss-brow.

"My frolicsome days will sune be owre," she cried, laughing; "the guidwife of Auchincleuch will hae something else to do than jump frae the moss-brow; and, while my name is Nancy Morrison, I'll hail the dules, or jump wi' the best o' my auld playmates."

"Weel dune, Nancy!" cried I; "you are now to be the wife o' the Laird o' Auchincleuch, when your jumping days will be at an end, and I am soon to be sent to college, where the only jump I may get may be from the top of a pile of old black-letter folios—no half sae guid a point of advantage as the moss-brow."

"There's the Laird o' Auchincleuch coming," cried Peggy Chalmers, one of the peat-casters, who was standing aside along with several others. "He's nae langer the daft Will Mather, wha liked a jump as weel as the blithest swankie o' the barnyard. Siller maks sair changes; and yet, wha wad exchange the Will Scott of Auchincleuch, your rich bridegroom, Nancy, for the Will Mather, your auld lover? Dinna tempt Providence, my hinny! The laird winna like to see his bride jumpin frae knowe to knowe like a daft giglet, within a week o' her marriage."

"Tout!" cried Nancy, bursting out into a loud laugh; "see, he's awa round by the Craw Plantin, and winna see us—and whar's the harm if he did? Come now, Tammie, just ae spring and the last, and I'll wad ye my kame against

your cravat, that I beat ye by the length o' my marriage slipper."

"Weel dune, Nancy!" cried several of the peat-casters, who, leaning on their spades, stood and looked at us with pleasure and approbation.

The laird had, as Nancy said, crossed over by what was called the Craw Plantin, and was now out of sight. To make the affair more ludicrous—for we were all bent on fun—Nancy took out, from among her high-built locks of auburn hair, her comb—a present from her lover—and impledged it in the hands of Billy Watson, along with my cravat, which I had taken off, and handed to the umpire.

"Here is a better moss-brow," cried one, at a distance.

And so to be sure it was, for it was much higher than the one we had fixed upon, and the landing-place was soft and elastic. Our practice was, always to jump together, so that the points of the toes could be measured when both the competitors' feet were still fixed in the moss. We mounted the moss-brow. I was in high spirits, and Nancy could scarcely contain herself, for pure, boisterous, laughing glee. I went off, but the mad girl could not follow, for she was still holding her sides, and laughing immoderately. I asked her what she laughed at. She could not tell. She was under the influence of one of those extraordinary cachinnations that sometimes convulse our diaphragms, without our being able to tell why, and certainly without our being able to put a stop to them. Her face was flushed, and the fire of her glee shone bright in her eye. I took my position again.

"Now!" cried I; and away we flew, and stuck deeply in the soft and spongy moss.

I stood with my feet in the ground, that the umpire might come and mark the distance. A loud scream broke on my ear. I looked round, and, dreadful sight! I saw

Nancy lying extended on the ground, with the blood pouring out at her mouth in a large stream! She had burst a blood-vessel. The fit of laughing which preceded her effort to leap had, in all likelihood, distended her delicate veins, and predisposed her to the unhappy result.

The loud scream had attracted the notice of the bridegroom, who came running from the back of the Craw Plantin. The sight appalled and stupefied him. He cried for explanation, and ran forward to his dead or dying bride, in wild confusion. Several voices essayed an explanation, but none were intelligible. I was as unable as the rest to satisfy the unhappy man; but, though we could not speak intelligibly, we could act, and several of us lifted her up. This step sealed her fate. The change in her position produced another stream of blood. She opened her eyes once, and fixed them for a moment on Will Scott. She then closed them, and for ever.

I saw poor Nancy carried home. Will Scott, who upheld her head, fainted before he proceeded twenty yards, and I was obliged to take his place. I was almost as unfit for the task as himself; for I reproached myself as the cause of her death. I have lived long. Will the image of that procession ever pass from my mind? The blood-stained moss-ground, the bleeding body, the trailing clothes, the unbound locks, are all before me. I can proceed no further. Would that I could stop the current of my thoughts as easily as that of this feathered chronicler of sorrow! But—

> "There is a silent sorrow here,
> A grief I'll ne'er impart;
> It breathes no sigh, it sheds no tear,
> But it consumes my heart."

I have taken up my pen to add, that Will Mather still remains a bachelor, and that on every visit I make to Dumfries-shire, I take my dinner, *solus cum solo*, at Auchin-

cleuch, and that many tears are annually shed, over a snug bottle, for poor Nancy.

THE MEDAL.

I was educated in a Scottish university, where prizes were distributed to the most distinguished students in each class at the termination of the session. The most distinguished prize was a gold medal, value ten guineas, the gift of a departed *eleve*, and awarded to the best scholar in the mathematical class. Having a natural turn or bias for mathematical pursuits, I applied myself night and day to the attainment of this my object of ambition; and this, too, at the expense and neglect of all the other classes which I attended. I was a very imperfect Latin scholar, I knew almost nothing of Greek, and held the unscientific reasoning of logic and moral philosophy in great contempt. By great labour, and after a severe competition, I succeeded in attaining the distinction at which I aimed, and saw myself blazoned in several newspapers as the holder of this distinguishing badge. My great chum at college was a Mr Donald Ferguson, a lad of a staid and persevering disposition, of a well-balanced and judicious mind, and without any talents, *apparently*, which bespoke future distinction. We had been friends and companions at school—our parents were friends before us—and, although we differed materially in disposition, this did not prevent the closest and most affectionate intercourse. Oh! such recollections as now rush upon my mind!—

> "Dear happy scenes of innocence and ease—
> Scenes of my youth, when every sport could please!"

Ferguson and I spent whole days together in the solitude of nature, with nothing but the deep blue and fleecy white overhead; the stunted thorn and the croaking raven above; and the brawling brook and trout-dimpled pool before us. In

all games of activity I had the start of Ferguson, and was always first chosen at "King o' Cantilon," "the dools," and "shinty;" but he had the advantage again of me in feats of strength and precision of eye—in the quoits and putting-stone. But I am wandering from my purpose, and forgetting my narrative.

Ferguson would often admonish me that I was giving offence to several professors, in order to gain the good opinion of one, and that the applause which my medal would procure for me might be too dearly bought at the expense of every other department of study. I took all this in good part, but without altering, in the least, my conduct, as I answered that my friend was making a virtue of necessity, and recommending that course of obscure diligence to me which he, by nature, was destined to pursue.

In consequence of the *eclat* of the medal, I had an invitation to make one of a pleasure party to Roslin, and had the happiness of being introduced to some young ladies, who had previously expressed to my friend Ferguson a wish to make my acquaintance. We spent a most delightful day—

> "'Midst Roslin's bowers sae bright and bonny,
> And a' the sweets o' Hawthornden."

The ladies were young, bright, and beautiful, light of heart, and delightfully pleasing in manners and conversation. I had not been previously accustomed to such fascinating society; and I felt that kind of intoxication which youth, innocence, and strong passion only can feel. I was all day *off* my feet, and gave way to every manner of fun, frolic, and foolery, to show that, though I was an immense philosopher, I was still a man in every pulse and vein. There was in this happy group one divine countenance; an eye so blue, and so soft, and so penetrating—lips that moved in meaning, and held every instant communication of the most electric character, with a little playful, almost wily dimple

which gave the most varied fascination to a cheek of sunshine and almost rosy hue. Her form

> "Was fresher than the morning rose
> When the dew wets its leaves—unstain'd and pure
> As is the lily or the mountain snow."

In a word, as you will easily perceive, I was captivated; and could do nothing all the ensuing night but toss and think, and think and toss, till nature at last steeped me anew, not in forgetfulness, but in all the motley, medley joys and gambols of Roslin. I had now become a student of divinity; but all study was with me at an end. No party of young people—particularly where young ladies were concerned—could be held without me; and I had the very great misfortune to be talked of by them as monstrous clever. The young lady to whom I had so long paid particular attention, and at whose house (that of the widow of a respected clergyman of the Church of Scotland) I had long been a habitual and a welcome guest, at last consented to receive me in future in the light of a lover. We walked it, talked it, and laughed it from morning to night, "as other lovers do," and scarcely thought of either the past or the future, being so completely engrossed with the present. Time flew by on angel wings, fleeting as bright, and the period of my examination, previous to my receiving license, at last approached. I had all the while a secret misgiving that I would not stand a trial, in the Presbytery of Edinburgh in particular; but I had no other residence for several years, and, consequently, no other way of becoming a licentiate. As good fortune would have it, the mother of my betrothed, through her interest with the Duke of Queensberry's factor, had every chance of procuring me a presentation the moment I was qualified to accept of it; and both she and her daughter would as soon have dreamed that I would fail in opening my eyes, as in obtaining the indispensable requisite of a license. What I had anticipated,

however, actually took place: I was found so deficient in the classics of Greece and Rome, that my license was delayed, and I was remitted for twelve months to my studies. This was a degree of disgrace and degradation which altogether unmanned me. I could not face my beloved Mary, or her mother, or any of my own friends and acquaintances, under such circumstances. Sleep fled my eyes, and my mind became unhinged. Existence itself became a positive, insupportable misery. I fled to the mountains; but they, through all their glens and streams, had tongues that syllabled beloved names, which I wished, were it possible, to forget. Wherever I went, the horrors of the past were ever present. People seemed to me to stop and point the finger of scorn at me from every street and doorway. At last, in a fit of despair, I rashly resolved on self-destruction, and plunged headlong into Leith harbour. I have the sound of the waters still in my ears, and that sound will, I verily believe, remain till that of the last trumpet shall mingle with it. When I awoke from seeming nonentity, I was surrounded by many and unknown faces; and my passage back to life was more terrific and painful by far than my exit. I had been for some time in a warm bed, and undergoing the means of resuscitation. "Much kinder," thought I, "had ye been to let me go." My name, parentage, &c., having been ascertained, my father was written to, and I was kept in close custody till his arrival. My father was a respectable farmer in Dumfries-shire, and immediately hurried me away to my native glen. My mother met me with tears; but they were those of sympathy and affection, and one word of reproach she never uttered. I became gradually more and more calm: but at times the thoughts of the paradise which I had lost, and the hell I had earned, would throw me absolutely into convulsions. The calmness which gathered over my soul was not that of resignation—it was the settled gloom of despair. Religion

was talked of and pressed upon me; but as yet I had no settled views on that subject. I neither believed nor disbelieved: I was willing, when the subject obtruded itself upon my thoughts, to get rid of it the best way I could. At last my melancholy gradually undermined a naturally good constitution, and it was manifest to my medical adviser that I was verging towards that degree of weakness and decay which, under various distinctive appellations, is sure to terminate in death. A change of scene was urged, and I was hurried away to Saturness Point, that I might inhale the sea breeze, and be interested in new objects. This measure was at first partially successful; but, happening to see a newspaper one day, in which the settlement of my more steady companion in the very church which I had once destined for myself was mentioned, and reading in the very same page a notice of his marriage with my beloved Mary, I became immediately frantic. For years my mind was so far unhinged that a person was appointed to watch my motions, and guard me from self-destruction. "Oh, that cursed medal!" was I heard again and again to exclaim; "it is to this I have to trace my every wo." What I endured, during this dark and fearful night, no power of fancy can image, no pen can describe. *Horresco referens.*

As God would have it, the person who was thus associated with me night and day was religiously disposed, and took occasion, when opportunity served, to lead my mind to serious subjects—to talk of eternity, immortality, heaven, and hell. Often did I kick against the pricks, and strive to resume my former indifference; but it would not do. The very *possibility* of such awful truths was terrific. I awoke all at once, as it were, to a sense of my imminent danger. I found that I was sleeping on a parapet, from which to fall was certain death. I fled with all possible speed to the only city of refuge—to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. I grasped the truths of the gospel with the energy of a dying

creature. I hugged the very Bible to my bosom, and read it night and day. Our conversations were protracted, and, to me, ultimately delightful. I found that there was mercy even to the *chief* of sinners, and I regarded myself as personally referred to in the gracious intimation. With the perception and cultivation of gospel truth, my health gradually rallied, and my mind assumed a more balanced attitude. It was about this time that my father died, and the superintendence of a pretty extensive sheep-farm naturally devolved upon me. This avocation, uncongenial as it was to my college pursuits and feelings, still occupied my attention, and withdrew me from reflections of no very pleasing nature. In cultivating, or rather in renewing, my acquaintance with the soil, and with its productions, vegetable as well as animal, I felt that I was placed as it were in the outer vestibule of God's temple. Into the holy of holies, through the blessed mediation, I had already been introduced, and it gave me pleasure to behold the outer, as well as to contemplate the inner, courts of so stupendous an erection. "The Shepherd of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. My sheep hear my voice. He shall separate the sheep from the goats. The streams that run amongst the hills. Mount Carmel, Mount Zion, Mount Horeb." These and similar expressions, in which the Jewish Scriptures, in particular, abound, came home to my newly-renovated, and, I trust, regenerated, perceptions, with a vividness and a force formerly unknown. I seemed to myself to be a dweller on the mountains of Jacob, and amongst the tents of Israel, as my flocks scattered themselves on the hill-side, or pursued the green pasturage by the streams of waters. There was a harmony and correspondence betwixt the seen and the unseen, the present and the past, the temporal and the spiritual life, of which I every day became more and more aware.

About this time we received intimation of the death of

my father's brother, who had gone, early in life, to Kingston in Jamaica, and had, by prosperous adventures as a merchant, realised a considerable sum of money. After various delays and much peculation, the residue of his fortune, together with his will, was transmitted home, and I found myself, as my father's heir-male, entitled to upwards of £10,000. My mother had already greatly declined, indeed she never fully rallied after my father's death; and on the very day on which the papers respecting the inheritance arrived, I had to perform the last sad duties to one of the best of parents. Alas! that ever my unhappy conduct should have occasioned pain and anxiety in a bosom where pure affection and undefiled religion habitually resided! I had the consolation, however, to receive my mother's blessing in her parting breath, and to hear her construe my misconduct and misfortunes into merciful dispensations of a wise Providence, who is ever bringing good out of seeming evil.

"And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression."

The lease of the farm having expired in a year after this, I did not think of continuing on a spot which suggested so many recollections connected with the departed; so I at once removed to furnished lodgings in Edinburgh, and gradually renewed my acquaintance with a few of my still surviving friends. Amongst these was the mother of my Mary, who informed me that her daughter was now a widow and without family, and was expected in a month or two to return to her old fireside from the Manse of ——. I do not know how it was, but I trembled all over at this information, and an image, which had for so long a time been almost obliterated from my memory, now rose before me in all its original loveliness. The two months appeared to me two twelvemonths, till I again saw, and renewed my acquaintance, with the only woman whom my soul had ever loved. Mutual explanations took place: she had married my friend

Ferguson, under the impression that, if not dead, I was confined in a lunatic asylum; and had only consented, after all, at the earnest request of her mother. It was but yesterday that we had a most delightful drive to Roslin, where I renewed my addresses, and have been accepted. I have taken a neat cottage near Hawthornden, where I mean to spend with Mary the remainder of my days, if not in the fervour of young love, at least in the more enduring, perhaps, and more rational endearments of mutual affection, friendship, and esteem. The medal, which was the foundation of all my sufferings, I have at this moment suspended before me, in my study, that I may be ever reminded of that false step which, but for the interposition of Providence, might have ruined both soul and body for ever. If it shall be in God's providence that I am blessed with any pledges of affection by my dear Mary, I shall endeavour to save them from the danger which I so narrowly escaped; yet, so strangely commingled are the good and bad things of life—so very delicately are the fine threads that go to form the web of our moral system connected and interlaced—that it requires a hand finer than mere man's to remove some of the dingy lines, so as to restore to the whole that beauty it possessed when spread in the garden of Eden. If we take from the noble steed the emulation that may hurry him over the precipice, we will see him distanced at the next St Leger. Must we, then, secure the good, and run the risk of the attendant evil? The answer does not seem difficult. Let emulation be by all means encouraged; but let all teachers and parents impress upon the minds of the fortunate competitors the true value of the prize won. And whilst efforts are made in one direction, let it ever be remembered that a *useful* education comprehends *breadth* as well as *length;* and that the departments which have been neglected may prove, in future life, those of the most essential value in promoting success and securing happiness.

THE MEETING AT ST BOSWELL'S.

It is now some years since I happened to visit the pretty little village of St Boswell's, in Roxburghshire, in company with a friend, who had some stock to dispose of at the great annual fair then holding there. Most of my readers are aware that the Duke of Buccleugh is lord of the manor of St Boswell's, and that a dinner is always provided, at his grace's expense, in a barn on the fair ground, for all gentlemen who have tickets of admission from the baron bailie. While my friend was busied with the disposal of his stock, I, being an idler, wandered up and down the green, and was much pleased with the appearance of the fair, which was more English, if I may be allowed to use the term, than anything of the kind I had ever witnessed in Scotland. The numbers, neat arrangement, and really handsome appearance of the "street" of booths—the gay and well-dressed parties of gentlefolks—the cheerful, joyous faces of the lower orders—the handsome equipages—the green at a distance, swarming with cattle of various kinds—with a bright and genial sun shining over all—formed altogether a pleasing and animated scene. Pleased as I was, however, I caught myself several times involuntarily yawning, and turning my eyes towards the barn; and I was not at all sorry when the welcome sound of the drum announced that "the roast beef" was ready. I was soon seated beside my friend, who, like myself, was most ready and anxious to do justice to the duke's liberal provision. I have a great talent for eating, but none for description, so I will not attempt to enumerate or describe the variety of good things which *dis*-appeared before us; suffice it, we were all much more con-

tented with ourselves and each other when all was over, than before our operations commenced. Commend me to a man who has just made a good dinner—if he be not a philanthropist then, he never will be. Happening to glance my eye towards the other end of the table, I observed that I was the object of close and intense attention to one of the company—a stranger of prepossessing aspect, who was seated at some distance at the opposite side. He gazed at me with an earnestness almost amounting to rudeness; and whenever I glanced in that direction, I perceived that his eye was constantly riveted upon my countenance. At first, I was considerably annoyed by the persevering scrutiny of his gaze; but, after a time, I was conscious of a vague impression on my mind that I had seen his face before; but when or where, I in vain endeavoured to recall. I was in the unpleasant situation of one who hears a long-forgotten melody, which stirs up within his mind overpowering and indefinable emotions, though, at the moment, the associations connected with it are forgotten. A confused train of visions of the past, of pleasure and of pain, crowded through my brain, with a dreamy consciousness that the stranger was, in some way or another, connected with them. I could not, for the life of me, shake off the impression his features had made upon my mind; and I wandered up and down, through all the bustle of the fair, as abstracted as if I were in a desert—treading upon the toes of the present, and raking up the ashes of the past, to puzzle out some connection between them and the stranger; but in vain. The indignant looks and half-suppressed curses of those I jostled or trod upon alike failed in rousing me from my reverie, till a violent push from the elbow of one of my victims sent me staggering against a gentleman who was standing close to one of the booths. It was the stranger.

How wonderful and unaccountable are the workings of the human mind, and what trifling incidents may present

us with a clue to the labyrinth of thought we have been in vain endeavouring to unravel!

In making my apologies to the stranger, my eye chanced to glance upwards to the *sign* above the entrance to the booth; it was "The Old Ship." A flash of sudden recollection lighted up the dark places of my memory—the friend of my early days stood before me.

"Sandford!—in the name of all that's strange, is that you?"

"My name is Sandford Grant," said he, "and I know and feel that you are an old friend. I have been thinking of nothing else since I saw you in the barn; but my memory plays me false—I cannot recollect when or where we have met before."

"Look up at that board—perhaps it will assist your recollection, as it did mine."

"The Old Ship!" exclaimed he, with a look of wonder and inquiry. "The Old Ship!" he repeated, slowly and distinctly, and then he gazed long and earnestly in my face, till at length the look of indecision and doubt gave place to a sudden glow of delighted recognition. "Douglas!" exclaimed he, with a long and cordial shake of the hand.

"The same, my dear fellow. It is ten long years since we met, and time has left his marks upon us both; no wonder we did not recognise each other at first; particularly as it was in such a very different scene we last met, or rather parted."

We spent the evening together, as two long-separated friends should do, in talking over the events of our early years, and relating our mutual adventures since we parted. As I did not know Sandford myself at first, it is hardly to be expected that the reader can know either of us without a formal introduction; which is the more necessary, as we are both to figure in the tale I am about to relate.

Those of my readers who have passed through Longtown in Cumberland may have remarked, on the left-hand side of the main street, as they entered the town from the bridge, a neat red-brick house, with an iron-railed enclosure in front, and a large gateway to the right, leading into the courtyard. In that house Sandford Grant and I first became acquainted with each other; it was then an academy. The house still remains, but master and pupils are "scattered to the four winds of heaven." For three years we were class-fellows and friends; for we were just of the same age, and a Scottish feeling of clannish regard made us cling to each other more perhaps than we otherwise would have done. He was a handsome, spirited boy, or rather child, and was always ready, at a word, to fight my battles as well as his own. He was a great favourite on account of his frank, liberal disposition; but the most unlucky little dog that ever lived. If ever there was any mischief going on, he was sure to be concerned in it, and as sure of being discovered and punished; if there was only one puddle in the road on a Sunday, he, somehow or other, contrived to go out of his way to tumble into it, dirty his white stockings, and be recommended by the mistress to her husband's tender mercies. In fact, he was constantly getting into scrapes; so much so that "Sandford's luck" became quite a proverb among us.

It was with sad hearts and tears on both sides that we parted, when circumstances obliged me to accompany my family to the south. We were then about eleven years of age; and having lately read the tale of Damon and Pythias, we felt assured that we would willingly follow their example, and were ready, if necessary, to immolate ourselves on the altar of friendship. Fortunately for us, there was no such necessity. The spring of tears in youth lies too near the surface—it is soon exhausted. We solaced our sorrows for the present, by promising that, as we could no longer see each other, we would exchange long letters, at least once

a-week. At first our correspondence added considerably to His Majesty's revenue; but our epistolary ardour soon cooled, till, at no very long interval, our correspondence fell into a gradual decline, and at last died away altogether. But the Fates had decreed that Sandford and I were not to part so easily. We met some years afterwards at the Military College at Addiscombe, where we added to the number of the East India Company's *hard bargains*. There we were inseparable; for, with all the warmth of early recollections around us, our renewed acquaintance soon ripened into sincere and devoted friendship.

After the usual term of probation at Addiscombe, Sandford obtained an appointment in the engineers, and I a cadetship of infantry, and we sailed from England together. On our arrival at Calcutta, we separated: he remaining at the presidency, and I being ordered up the country, to join my regiment at Cawnpore.

I pass over the details of my life in India; suffice it that, after ten years roasting under an eastern sun, I was pretty well done at last, and my liver began to give me sundry gentle hints that it was time for me to be moving, unless I wished to remain altogether where I was; accordingly, I applied for and obtained furlough to visit Europe for the benefit of my health. Though Sandford and I had been so long separated, we had always kept up a regular intercourse by letter, and we had arranged that, if practicable, we would take our furlough together; and, accordingly, we managed matters so that we took our passage in the same ship for England. Fortune had favoured us both in promotion; we had each attained the rank of captain in our respective corps. In congratulating Sandford on his good fortune, I remarked, in allusion to our school-days, that it was better than "Sandford's luck."

"You would not say so, my dear fellow," said he, "if you knew all. I am as unlucky a dog as ever; and you may

have reason yet, before we part, to wish we had not met again."

"Nonsense," said I; "let us enjoy the present, at all events, whatever the future may have in store for us. Come, order your palanquin, and let us be off; the boat was to be waiting for us at Champaul Ghaut at ten o'clock, and it only wants a few minutes of the hour."

Our ship, the Dolphin, was a beautiful little chartered free-trader, of about 600 tons, remarkably fast for a merchantman—a regular clipper, as her captain called her—and manned by an active and effective crew. She mounted twelve small carronades on her upper deck, and a neat brass swivel which traversed on the head of the capstan. On the 28th August, 18—, we sailed from Saugor with several other merchantmen, under convoy of H.M.S. Albatross. Our voyage was very tedious, unmarked by any variety except that of wind and weather; and our captain, who was a smart, active little man, an excellent disciplinarian, and much beloved by his crew, was dreadfully annoyed by the detention occasioned by the dull sailers of the fleet. At last he resolved, if possible, to effect his escape, and make the best of his way home. After we left St Helena, an opportunity, unfortunately for us, soon presented itself. One squally evening, the frigate made a signal for the convoy to carry easy sail, and to watch the commodore's motions during the night. Soon after dark, the wind freshened up to a strong breeze, with passing squalls and heavy rain at times. With her topgallantsails set over single-reefed topsails, the little Dolphin bounded over the waves in such style as to do credit to the name she bore; and, by keeping a little off the course she had before been steering, and carrying a press of sail through the night, made such good use of her *fins*, that at daybreak not a ship of the fleet was to be seen. We were all at first delighted with our freedom, and with the prospect of reaching our destination so much sooner

than we otherwise would have done; but, upon after reflection, we began to doubt the prudence of trusting to our own legs and arms, when we would have been so much safer under the wing of the Albatross. Captain Driver himself, however, was in high glee; he said he knew that few even of the crack privateers were matches for his little Dolphin. However, he neglected no means of adding to, and improving, the efficiency of his vessel: the men were exercised regularly at the guns, the passengers and servants drilled in the use of the muskets, and every precaution was adopted which skill and experience could suggest, to make our means of defence as available as possible.

In this way our time passed away stirringly and pleasantly enough, till we lost the south-east trade, and then we were tormented for nearly three weeks with calms and burning heat during the day, and heavy unceasing rains during the night. To add to our discomforts, a great mortality had taken place among our live stock, and we were for days floating about among a whole fleet of dead ducks and fowls, with the pleasant prospect before us of salt junk and hard Curtis* for the rest of the voyage."

"My old luck," said Sandford.

We had at last contrived to crawl as far as four degrees north, when, one afternoon, to our great joy, we observed signs of change in the weather. Light grey clouds were beginning to appear to the northward; and we watched with great interest those "ships of heaven" slowly and gradually moving upwards. Light *cats'-paws* began to ruffle the waters, and every here and there we saw in the distance shoals of fish sporting amid the roughness which the light and partial airs produced upon the surface. But we were still lying becalmed; the awnings were all spread, but the heat was oppressive; and the little Dolphin was rolling heavily in the long sea, dipping her bright sides deep

* A famous biscuit baker.

into the water. A long dark line was now visible on the horizon to the eastward, which gradually spread, and neared us.

"Thank goodness! there is a breeze at last!" said Captain Driver; and in half-an-hour's time the Dolphin was once more dancing along, like a living creature, over the waves. During the night, the wind drew gradually round to the northward; and before morning we had a fine steady north-east trade, which carried us as far as twenty-nine degrees north. From this time nothing particular occurred, till we arrived nearly in the parallel of the English Channel —the Lizard bearing about north-east-by-east of us, fifteen hundred miles distant. Here, after a succession of south-easterly breezes, we had another taste of "Sandford's luck," in the shape of a calm of two days' duration. On the morning of the third day, we were surprised by seeing, at some six or seven miles' distance to the south-west, a long, low, rakish-looking brig, with her royals furled and courses hauled up, and a pennant flying at the mast-head. Immediately on noticing us, she hoisted an English ensign, and fired a gun. Our boatswain, an old man-of-war's-man, immediately exclaimed that he recognised her as H.M. brig Hawk; and upon her firing a second gun, the quarter-boat was lowered and manned, and the second mate despatched in her. Sandford, who was fond of novelty, asked and obtained leave to join the party. Soon after the boat shoved off from the Dolphin, a light breeze from the southward filled the stranger's sails, and she drew a little nearer. We were all anxious for news from England, and watched our boat with great anxiety, as she went alongside of the brig; but what was our surprise to observe that the crew were all called up, and two of the stranger's men were sent into the boat! The brig was all this time slowly and gradually approaching us, while we were lying helplessly becalmed, watching the breeze as it rippled over the still, smooth water, about half-way between the vessels. The stranger

was now within two miles of us, when the light air, which had so long been favouring her, began to roughen the sea close under our stern. A bright flash and a thick cloud of smoke now burst from the stranger's bow, and the loud, sharp report of a gun broke, with startling import, on our ears, while, at the same moment, the English ensign was hauled down, and the white flag of France floated proudly in its stead, and a red cornet fluttered at the main.

"Here's a pretty business!" said Captain Driver. "We will give them a run for it, however."

In an instant, all was bustle and activity an board the little Dolphin: every stitch of canvas was spread to catch the coming breeze; two of the guns were *trained* aft, and pointed out of the cabin windows; not a voice was heard on board, but that of the captain; the men moved actively and noiselessly about, watching their commander's eye, and in prompt obedience to his orders. The little Dolphin herself seemed conscious that danger was near, so silently did she slip through the water, as her lofty sails swelled out with the light but steady breeze. There was such a hush among us on board, after all the sails had been set, that the only sound heard was the hissing noise made by the ship as she cut rapidly through the smooth water, and the small bubbles floated away astern. Presently a tiny wave raised its white crest here and there, and broke with a gentle murmur; there was glad music in the sound—for it was a sign that the breeze was freshening. In the course of an hour, though the water was still smooth, the Dolphin was beginning to *speak* audibly, and the white foam-bells danced merrily past her.

In the meantime, the stranger had not been idle. She had at first made use of her sweeps; but, as the breeze freshened, she laid them in. Her lofty spars were crowded with canvas, and she seemed to be rather gaining upon us. We could see that her decks were crowded with men; and every now and then she sent a shot after us.

"Talk away, my boys," said the gallant little captain "I have no time to return the compliment. If I can only keep clear of you till dark, I will weather you yet." The poor little Dolphin glided away beautifully, and proved that she well merited her good character; for, after some hours' chase, the privateer had gained but little upon us; but still there appeared no chance of our escaping in the long run. About noon, the enemy was within range, and no sooner made the discovery, than she began blazing away with her bow-guns, in hopes of disabling us; but fortune, for once in her life, favoured the weaker party. The privateer's shot riddled our sails; but our spars and hull were as yet unharmed, when a well-aimed shot from one of our stern-chasers went through her fore-topgallantsail, and struck the mast just above the cap. Three cheers burst from our gallant crew, as they saw her small masts first bend, then fall forward together before the foretopsail, dragging with them the main-royal and skysail masts. The sailing of the two vessels was so nearly equal, that we now had a decided advantage over the enemy, which Captain Driver did all in his power to make the most of. Two of the foremost guns were *trained* aft, and the men were all ordered to lie down on the deck close to the taffrail, to bring the ship more by the stern. There were active hands, however, on board the privateer. In a wonderfully short time, the wreck was cleared away, and new spars had replaced the crippled ones. She came crawling quickly up again; and it was evident to all on board the Dolphin, that, unless some unforeseen accident saved us, a few hours would seal our fate.

It was now late in the evening; the sun had set, and dark, louring clouds were hanging over the horizon to the westward. The water was still tolerably smooth, and the wind was a little on our starboard quarter; the privateer was coming up rather to leeward, gaining rapidly upon us,

and peppering away as fast as she could with her bow-chasers. Some of her shot *told* upon our hull, smashing the cabin bulk-heads, but hurting no one; and, fortunately, our spars were as yet untouched. But she was not so lucky —for we could see, by their getting preventer-backstays upon her fore-topmast, that the mast was crippled. Captain Driver perceived that there was no chance of escaping much longer by fast sailing, and he determined to try what stratagem could do for us. He called his men round him, and explained to them what his intentions were; telling them that everything depended upon their energy and activity, and promising them, in the name of his owners, a handsome reward if they succeeded in saving the ship. Immediately after the next shot fired by the privateer, the man at the helm, by Captain Driver's orders, began to yaw the ship about—the stunsails were hauled in—the royal sheets let go—the sails clued up, but not furled—the top-gallantsails lowered, and the colours hauled down. Every movement must have appeared to the enemy indicative of terror and indecision; and we could distinctly hear the cheers with which they hailed the lowering of our ensign. In the midst of our apparent confusion, the yards of the Dolphin were quietly drawn forward to starboard, and the men and passengers stationed at the topgallant and royal halyards, and royal sheets. The privateer, which some of our men now recognised as the notorious Hercule of Brest, came bowling upon our larboard quarter, taking in and furling all her small sails, and hauling up her courses. When she was so close to us that we might almost have thrown a biscuit on board, the French captain jumped upon the bulwark with his trumpet in his hand, as if to hail us.

"Now, my lad," said Driver to the man at the helm, "remember what I told you. When I call out to you to put the helm hard a-starboard, put it hard a-port."

The privateer captain was just putting the trumpet to

his lips, when Captain Driver bawled out, "Put the helm hard a-starboard!"

As he expected, this order was instantly echoed on board the privateer, who thought we intended to try and run aboard of him. As I said before, the wind was a little on our starboard quarter; and the Frenchman, by paying quickly *off*, threw his sails aback; while the little Dolphin, *her* helm having been put to port instead of starboard, flew *up* to the wind, and, her yards being all ready braced up, darted away like an arrow to windward—this being her favourite sailing point; at the same moment, the topgallant sails were sheeted home and set, and the royals hoisted.

It was some little time before the privateer recovered from the surprise and confusion occasioned by this unexpected manœuvre; and, by the time her yards were trimmed and sails set, the Dolphin had again a good start of her. We had now reason to bless the fortunate shot that had crippled her fore-topmast; for she was afraid to carry such a press of sail as she otherwise would have done. However, disabled as she was, she was still a match for us, and kept throwing her shot after us, in token of her friendly feeling.

"Hurrah, my little beauty!" said Captain Driver, apostrophising his ship; "another hour, and we are safe."

The privateer was gaining upon us slowly but surely, when the night, which, fortunately for us, was dark and gloomy, set in. Captain Driver kept a light burning in the stern cabin, and gave strict orders that every other light in the ship should be put out. He then had a large water-butt sawed in half, and fitted into it a light bamboo staff, to the end of which a lantern was affixed. The tub was well ballasted; and, when all was ready, it was lowered down nearly to the water's edge astern, the lantern lighted, and the lamp in the captain's cabin extinguished. Just as the lanyards were let go, and the tub, with its decoy light, fell into the water, we fired both our stern-chasers, to deceive

the enemy, and immediately bore up, and stood away, under a press of sail, to the westward. The night was pitch dark; the wind drawing round to the southward and westward, and with every appearance of further change.

Our ruse succeeded completely. We were only aware of the privateer's position by the bright flashes of her guns, as she fired them in chase, as she thought; and by the twinkling light of the floating lantern, which was, at last, suddenly extinguished, after a brisk fire from the Frenchman. We ran, for a couple of hours, to the westward; and then, the wind gradually heading us, we kept away again for the Channel, and, before morning, we had a fine staggering westerly breeze to help us along.

At daylight, nothing was to be seen from the mast-head; and we cheerfully pursued our voyage, rejoicing in our fortunate escape. We had now time to think of and to lament the hard fate of our shipmates, who had been so cleverly entrapped.

"Sandford's luck, again," said I. "Poor fellow, how strange it is that such a fatality always seems to attend him!"

"You forget," said Captain Driver, "that the men who are with him are in the same unlucky predicament, and of course are equally unfortunate. But it *is* curious to observe how some men are favoured and others persecuted by fortune. When I was a youngster, I sailed with a captain (a smart, active, intelligent man he was) who told me that ever since he had commanded a ship, each alternate voyage had always been an unlucky one. 'And this,' said he, 'is my unlucky one.' And sure enough it was so; for, from the commencement to the close of it, it was one constant series of misfortunes. However, I have no doubt our poor lads will be well enough off on board the privateer—the French are fine fellows, after all; but I do not envy them the quarters that await them on shore."

The breeze continued steady; and in about ten days' time we had run down a great part of our distance from the Lizard, which we expected to *make* in two days more. One morning the man at the mast-head reported a large ship to the southward, and Captain Driver *made her out* to be a man-of-war. We immediately crowded all sail, with the horrors of a French prison before us; but she had already noticed us, and come bowling after us, firing a gun to bring us to, and hoisting English colours. After a long and anxious survey of the stranger, Captain Driver was satisfied that she was an English frigate, and accordingly hoisted his colours and hove to. From the lieutenant who boarded us, we learned that the frigate was H.M.S. ——, bound to Spithead. When we related to him our adventure with the privateer, he told us that it was no wonder we were deceived; for that the Hercule was often mistaken for the Hawk, and that the real Hawk was cruising about the *chops* of the Channel, in hopes of falling in with her. We followed in the wake of the frigate up Channel, and, on the 1st May, to our great joy, we cast anchor once more on the shores of Old England. I remained two years at home, and then returned to the East, without having heard any news of poor Sandford's fate.

"And now, my dear Sandford," said I, "tell me all your adventures since we parted company so unexpectedly."

"You may imagine our surprise," replied he, "when we found how quietly we poor gulls had thrust our heads into the eagle's nest. The second mate of the Dolphin and I had hardly set foot on the deck of the stranger, when we saw at a glance our mistake; and, if we had any doubts on the subject, they were soon set at rest by the captain, who said to us, shrugging his shoulders, with a smile—

"'Messieurs, you are my prisonnars; dere is no use for de resiste; call your men out of de boat.'

"We saw too plainly that resistance was vain, and we submitted to our hard fate as patiently as we could. The boat's crew were sent down into the hold, and sentries placed over them, and we were disarmed, but allowed the range of the deck and cabin, giving our parole that we would hold no intercourse with our own men or the crew. When we saw the privateer's sails swell with the breeze, and when with her long sweeps she began to crawl along 'like a centipede,' while the little Dolphin lay stationary and becalmed, we feared that we should soon have more companions in captivity. Great was our delight when the gallant little vessel glided away like a fairy before us, and we began to have some hopes of your escape, knowing as we did what a character the Dolphin had for sailing.

"'Well done, my beauty!' shouted the mate.

"'Ah, mon ami,' said the Frenchman, 'do not rejoice too queek; before night, your leetel beauté, as you call hare, shall be mine."

"I cannot describe his mortification at the skilful manœuvre by which you baffled him just as he thought he was sure of you, and contrived to steal away again to windward of him; but, after a time, when his angry feeling had passed away, he could not help exclaiming—

"'Parbleu! he is one clevare man, that capitane! He most be var weak after lose one boat's crew, and yet how he manage his sheep skeelfully! 'Tis almost peety not let him rone away; bote I mos catch heem—he cannot escape long.' When the night set in so dark and gloomy, he said —'Well, begar, I do begin think that capitane of yours is not so vary clevare man after all. How he most be fool to carry that light!—without that lumiere I should lose sight of heem quite entirely, the night is so, what you call, so tar —no—peetch dark.'

"'I suppose,' said I, 'in the confusion he has forgot it.'

"'Not a bit of it,' said Gordon, the mate, to me, aside;

'Captain Driver is not such a fool as he thinks. He has some reason for what he is doing, depend upon it.'

"After a time, the light, which had kept a pretty equal distance ahead of us, became apparently stationary, and we came up to it with great rapidity.

"'Ah,' said the Frenchman, 'he is tire at last. We have catch heem.'

"We all thought that some of our chance shots had taken effect, and that the Dolphin, unable to escape, had hove to, to surrender. As we came near the light, the small sails were taken in and furled, the courses hauled up, and the boat was cleared away for lowering to board the prize.

"'Begar, dis is ver extraordinare!' said the Frenchman to me—'dere is de light, but I do not see de sheep. Sheep ahoy!' No answer. 'Sheep ahoy! Answere, or I weel fire.' Still no answer. 'Tirez donc!' A broadside was fired, and the light disappeared.

"Not a cry or sound of any kind was heard after the noise of the firing had ceased. The poor little Dolphin, we thought, must have sunk at once; but yet it was very strange that so large a vessel (she was large compared to the Frenchman) could have been invisible and inaudible when so near us. The boats were lowered immediately, and furnished with lanterns, that their crews might see to save all they could. After a short time, they returned, bringing back, as the sole remains of the poor Dolphin, a few broken staves, and a bamboo, with a lantern lashed to the end of it. The French captain's blank stare of astonishment was at first quite amusing; but at last the truth flashed upon him, and, with a loud laugh, he exclaimed—

"'Parbleu! that capitane is one dam clevare fellow! He throw out one tub to catch a whale; he deserves to escape. *Néanmoins*, he is not safe yet.'

"He then hauled close to the wind, and stood to the eastward, thinking that you would make for the Channel as fast as possible. If it had not been for the name of the thing, we would have enjoyed the cruise very much; for the French captain and his officers were polite and gentlemanly, and treated us as messmates and friends. *Their* destination was Brest, and ours, eventually, a French prison, till we should be ransomed or exchanged—a pleasant way for me to enjoy my three years' furlough!

"One afternoon, just after dinner, as we were dodging to the eastward, with the wind at north, a sail appeared ahead, but too far off to distinguish what she could be. All sail was immediately made in chase, and we rapidly neared the object of our pursuit. She was a lumbering, heavy-looking brig, under topgallantsails, painted with a broad, dirty white streak, turning up at each end with a *sheer* like a bow. We hoisted French colours, and fired a gun to leeward; she showed an English ensign, and immediately began to make more sail, which she did in a regular collier-like fashion, and went floundering and plunging along like a cart-horse over a ploughed field; and the more sail she made, the slower she seemed to go. We were all mightily amused with her clumsy attempts to escape, and wondered at her folly in exasperating her enemy by such unavailing efforts. Gun after gun was fired to bring her to; but still she floundered on, kicking up her stern as if in derision, as her heavy bow plunged deep into the water. At last the captain of the privateer got into a towering passion, and swore he would sink her when he got alongside. While the brig, or at least her crew, were straining every nerve to escape, one of her maintopgallant sheets *went;* and the awkward and slovenly manner in which the sail was handled excited the laughter of all on board our small craft. The brig at this time, as if aware that escape was hopeless, took in her royals, and lowered her topgallantsails, but without

altering her course, or striking her colours. It was dusk when we came within speaking distance; and, running up close under her quarter, our captain seized the speaking-trumpet, and ordered the brig to strike her colours immediately, or he would sink her. What was his surprise, when, in answer to his hail, three deafening cheers resounded from the brig! Her deck was in an instant swarming with men; and, while our crew were gaping with astonishment, *the painted canvas screen* disappeared from her side as if by magic, and a broadside was poured into our hull, which made us reel again, and wounded and killed several of the crew. In justice to the Frenchman, I must say, that, as soon as the first surprise was over, he (the captain, I mean) was as cool and collected as possible. His orders were given rapidly and energetically; and actively and ably were they executed. He instantly stood away to the southward and eastward, and trusted to his heels to escape from an enemy whom he saw at a glance he was unable to cope with. In a few minutes, from the truck to the water's edge, the Hercule was one cloud of canvas; and merrily did she dance away over the waves. The English man-of-war crowded all sail after us; very differently was she *handled*, now she was no longer acting merchantman. She seemed to have cast aside her sluggishness with her disguise, and, to our great surprise, seemed rather to gain than lose ground. She kept on our weather (larboard) quarter; and her bow-chasers were in constant play, and remarkably well served —hardly a shot but told upon our rigging or hull.

"The Hercule was considered the fastest privateer out of France; but, before the wind, the brig was evidently gaining upon us. Not one of our shot had, as yet, done her any material injury, though her head sails were riddled through and through. This game could not last long;—the privateer determined upon trying another move. He was obliged to keep his pumps constantly going, for he had received seve-

ral shots between wind and water. Suddenly whipping in all his stunsails, he ran his yards forward, and hauled to the eastward. This manœuvre was rapidly and skilfully executed; and, as we shot across the bows of the English brig, we poured a raking broadside into her, which, we afterwards learned, did not do so much damage as we expected, as our guns were pointed too high. Three cheers rang from the English brig; as quick as thought, they *ran* in their stunsails, and, following our movements, hauled to the wind.

"As the privateer had anticipated, the moment the brig rounded to, her foretopsail and topgallantsail, already in tatters, blew clean out of the bolt-ropes. This was a glorious sight for the privateer, but a sad one for us poor prisoners; we thought that all chance of escape was at an end, and that it was impossible for the brig to shift her sails quickly enough to save her distance. But 'impossible' is a landsman's word—there is none such on board a British man-of-war; her fore-rigging was swarming with men in a moment, and in ten minutes more they were *bringing* a new topstail *to* the yard, and the topgallantyard was on its way to the mast-head again. In the meantime her bow guns had not been silent; a pretty smart conversation was carried on between them and our stern-chasers, and *their* answers were most unpleasantly *true* and galling. Her guns must have had picked marksmen stationed at them, for hardly a shot was thrown away.

"We were, however, leaving the brig rapidly, when a lucky shot from her came through one of our quarter-ports, and knocked down the two men at the helm. The privateer instantly flew up in the wind, and her head-sails took aback; and though the helmsmen were instantly replaced, and the vessel boxed off again skilfully and rapidly, yet the few minutes that elapsed before she paid off and gathered way again, were sufficient to make a great alteration in our relative positions.

"The English brig was now within half-a-mile on our weather quarter, gaining steadily and slowly, and throwing her single shot into us with the most unerring precision. At last an eighteen-pound shot struck our weather maintopsail yardarm; and the spar snapped in two close outside the slings. All chance of escape was now over; but the Frenchman, a gallant fellow, was determined not to strike till the last; and all the guns that could be brought to bear upon the brig were double-shotted, and rattled into her. In answer to this salute, the man-of-war gave a yaw to windward, and poured her starboard broadside into the privateer, with deadly effect; and then, bearing suddenly up amid the clouds of smoke, she ran close under our stern, and discharged her larboard guns, sweeping our decks fore and aft, dismounting two of our guns, killing five of our men, and carrying away our tiller-ropes. The privateer was now perfectly unmanageable; her topmasts were hanging in splinters over her sides; her brave captain was killed; there were three feet water in the hold; and the active and indefatigable brig was playing round and round, pouring in her remorseless fire. The French crew, seeing the madness and inutility of further resistance, struck their colours; and in a few minutes a boat came on board from H.M. brig Hawk, and the officers of the privateer surrendered their swords to the lieutenant in command; who, on receiving them, complimented the privateer's men highly on their gallant defence. I was greatly grieved at the death of the French captain, who, during our short sojourn with him, had endeared himself to us by his handsome and gentlemanly behaviour. He had allowed Gordon, the mate, and myself to dispose of ourselves as we thought proper during the action, on our giving our parole that we would not in any way interfere. As soon as the privateer ceased firing, the smothered sound of three cheers came faintly up the hatchway from our poor fellows in the hold, who rightly judged the result of the action.

They were immediately liberated; and a prize crew having been sent on board, the French took up the quarters just vacated by the 'Dolphins.'

"After a few hours spent in repairing damages, and in vigorous exercise at the pumps of the privateer, the Hawk, with her prize in tow, stood to the northward and eastward; and in a few days the Hercule, with the red ensign proudly floating above the flag of France, followed her captor into Spithead. As soon as I possibly could, I hastened up to town, where I found a letter lying for me at my agent's, to be delivered as soon as the Dolphin arrived (my friends knew I had taken my passage in that ship), begging me to hasten over to Ireland immediately, to attend the death-bed of a maternal uncle. I arrived in Dublin in time to attend the old gentleman's funeral, and to find, to my great surprise, that he had left the whole of his Irish property and a large estate in this country to his grateful nephew, on condition that I took his name. Fortune was tired of plaguing me at last. I was obliged to remain nearly three years in Ireland, in order to arrange matters satisfactorily with my agent, and to put everything in train for making my tenants as comfortable as possible. My other estate is in Perthshire, where I shall be delighted to enjoy the pleasure of *your* society, until you are wearied of *ours*.—I say ours, because I have a new friend to introduce to you in the person of my wife."

I accompanied Sandford home, and found his establishment such as I should have expected from a man of his liberal and enlightened turn of mind—handsome without ostentation—liberal without profusion. His lady was a most amiable and agreeable person—unaffected and cheerful in her manners. I was delighted with my first introduction to her. Coming forward to meet me with all the graceful ease that distinguishes a well-bred woman, and with all the warmth of manner of an old friend, she shook me most cordially by the hand.

"Mr Douglas," said she, "I am delighted to see you; often and often has Sandford talked over your mutual adventures, and regretted the evil destiny that separated him from his earliest and dearest friend. Your character is so familiar to me, that I feel as if, instead of addressing a stranger, I were talking to an old friend. I hope you will soon learn to look upon all here in the same light."

It was impossible not to feel instantly at home, where such genuine and sincere cordiality was displayed; and in a few hours I was as completely domesticated at Grant Hall, as if I had been its inmate for years. The very servants seemed to feel that in pleasing me they were pleasing their master and mistress; for whom, it was evident, they all felt the greatest affection and respect. It is a good sign of the heads of a house, when the servants grow grey at their posts; and most of those at Grant Hall seemed in a fair way of doing so. But I am digressing. While the ceremony of introduction between myself and Mrs Grant was in progress, a young lady was seated at one of the open windows. She raised her eyes on my entrance—and such eyes! However, I will say nothing more about them; for, though so much has already been spoken and written about ladies' eyes, one glance from such a pair as then beamed upon me was worth volumes of description. There was nothing at first particularly striking about the lady's appearance; at least nothing sufficiently so for particular notice or description; but, on further scrutiny, her features were faultlessly regular, and the expression of her countenance was so placid and gentle, that, had it not been for the lambent fire of her dark eyes, I might almost have fancied that some pure, cold, faultless creation of the sculptor's fancy sat before me. Hers was one of those faces which seldom *arrest* admiration at first sight, but which seem to display new beauties the longer they are gazed upon. Sandford introduced her as his sister Alice.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Miss Sandford," said I. "Your brother wished to give me an agreeable surprise, I suppose; for he never told me that you formed one of his family party."

"Sandford may have neglected to mention his sister to you, Mr Grant," said she, her bright eyes sparkling with animation, and giving life and energy to her features; "but I assure you he has not been backward in making you the theme of his discourse to us. I have often been inclined to feel jealous of his brotherly regard for you."

"Upon my word, Ned Douglas," muttered I to myself, when I was comfortably settled into my soft bed, "you're a lucky dog to have fallen into such good quarters. A few weeks ago, you were afraid to move, lest you should tumble out of your narrow cot, and break your invaluable head upon a hard deck; and now you are afraid to move for fear of losing yourself in this wilderness of a bed, or being smothered in an ocean of feathers."

It was bright and beautiful July; all nature brightened in the smile of the summer sun, and fair Alice smiled upon me. Could I be otherwise than happy?

Sandford was a keen fisherman; and we used to wander together day after day along the banks of the beautiful Tay—he to indulge in an amusement which he enjoyed with enthusiastic relish, and I to gratify my love for the beauties of nature, which are nowhere seen to greater perfection than on the banks of that noble stream. We always returned home to a late dinner, and the evenings were enlivened with music and song, in which both the ladies excelled, and in talking over the adventures of the day, and the stirring scenes of our past lives.

"What strange beings sailors must be!" said Alice to me one evening; "such compounds of contradictions!—so lavish, yet so selfish—so daring, yet so superstitious."

"Do you remember that strange old fellow, Rodney, the

quartermaster," said Grant, "who used to be such a favourite of yours? What yarns, as he called them, he used to spin!—enough to stagger the faith of the most credulous; and yet I really think the old fellow had told them so often that he believed them himself."

"Come, Mr Douglas," said Alice, "can you not revive your recollections of the past sufficiently to favour us with a sample of his yarns, as you call them? We have a long evening before us, and you know we ladies are fond of novelty and excitement."

"Well, Miss Alice, I will endeavour to gratify your love of the novel and marvellous; but, remember, the story I am about to tell is Rodney's, not mine. You talked of the superstition of sailors—I will repeat you one of his ghost stories, as it is less improbable than most of his yarns; and I know for a fact that there were numbers besides Rodney who firmly believed it."

"Well, but, Douglas," said Sandford, "let us have it in true Rodney style—slang and all. Don't be alarmed, ladies; by slang I only mean the peculiar phraseology of men of the Rodney stamp."

"Oh, do, Mr Douglas—now do! It will add so greatly to the effect of the story; and I am sure you will not say anything to shock our ears."

"Well, Miss Alice, I will do my best to please you; but I must endeavour, in the first place, to give you some notion of Rodney's appearance. Do you remember him distinctly, Sandford? I have his figure before my mind's eye—long, thin, and muscular; a kind of prototype of that pink of all coxswains and quartermasters, 'Long Tom Coffin;' his round, brightly-blackened hat flapped down upon his head, with an air of careless indifference; his thin, iron-grey hair peeping out behind, as if it was wondering where the queue was going to; and his face looking out in front, as rough and unmoved as the surface of a weatherbeaten rock.

"'Well, Rodney,' said I to him, one first-watch, when his spell at the cunn was over, and he was taking what he called a fisherman's walk* on the lee side of the poop—'well, Rodney, you really do believe in Flying Dutchmen, ghosts, and all that kind of nonsense?'

"'Believe!—Lord love your honour, to be sure I do! Didn't I sail with a man once as had been in a ship where one of the lads had seen the Flying Dutchman the voyage before, and swore to it, too? Believe! Why, axing yer honour's pardon, and meaning no offence, there's none but fools and long-shore chaps what doesn't believe them.'

"'Well, well; but ghosts, Rodney—did you ever see a ghost?'

"'Why, I can't say as how I ever seen one myself; but I knows them as has.'

"'Ah! and what sort of ghost was it?'

"'Why, it's a longish yarn, yer honour; and ye're wanting to turn in. You can't keep your eyes open like an old sailor; it's not naturable you should, seeing you haven't had the same opportunity of larning. You oodn't believe, now, I suppose, Mr Douglas, that I keeps watch and watch with my peepers, and always goes to sleep with one eye open? And, for the matter o' that, when I'm walking the deck by myself, I often takes off one of my shoes, to give 'em spell and spell about.'

"'Why,' said I, 'I have seen you keeping your shoes at watch and watch; but the eyes, Rodney—I can't swallow the eyes.'

"'Love yer honour, you hain't half a swally, then; when you've heerd as many queer yarns as I've heerd, and seen as many deviltries as I've seen, ye'll larn to swallow anything.'

"'But come, Rodney, let's have the ghost. I don't mean to turn in till eight-bells.'

* "Fisherman's walk"—two steps and overboard.

"The old man leaned back upon the hencoop on which I was sitting, crossed his arms over the breast of his pea-jacket, and began:—

"'Well, yer honour, Jack Rodney never was the man to lay at his anchors when the signal was made to get under weigh. I've been at sea, yer honour, man and boy, five-and-thirty years come next quarter-day; and there's ne'er a blue-jacket afloat as can say Jack Rodney ever sailed under false colours, or stretched a yarn beyond its bearings. When once old Jack gets his jawing-tacks aboard, his yarn runs off clear and quick, like the line off a log-reel in a breeze. I hates them stuttering beggars, axing yer honour's pardon, as boxes all the points of the compass, and never steers no strait coorse after all. Their words come creeping out as if they were afeerd the master-at-arms was a-going to put them in limbo; but a steady helm and a straight coorse for old Rodney, says I.'

"After the old man had talked himself into a proper opinion of his merits, he began at once to steer a straight course, as he called it.

"'Ye've never been in Chainey, yer honour? Ah you long-togged gentry has a vast to see! Why, you sits at home half your lives, and never knows nothing. Why, now I'll make bould to say yer honour doesn't know how to make a sea-pie or a dish of lobskous?'

"'Not I, Rodney.'

"'My eyes!' muttered the old man to himself, 'to think of a man coming to his years, and not knowing how to make lobskous! Why, sir, axing yer pardon, yer edication must have been sadly neglected.'

"'Oh, I shall improve under your tuition, Rodney; but now for the ghost.'

"'Well, sir, you sees when I was aboard the old Bruise-water, East Injeeman, we wor lying at our moorings in Wampoa Reach—that's in Chainey, yer honour. There

was a large fleet of us, all lying waiting for a cargo, with nothing in the varsal world to do but to keep the ships clean, and to play at race-horses with the boats. A grand sight it was, yer honour, to see so many fine large craft lying at anchor, all clean painted, and looking as gay as so many women rigged out for a dance ashore, with their red and striped ensigns all fluttering in the sunshine; and the lads all as neat and clean as shore-going gemmen. Why, Lord love you, this here craft would look like a cockle-shell alongside o' them! 'Twas a sight to do an old sailor's heart good, to see sich a show of merchantmen as no other country but Ould England could produce. And then, for such an outlandish, out-o'-the-way place as Chainey, the country wasn't so ill-looking neither. On each side of the river were the level green paddy fields, with here and there a little hill, with a joss-house peeping out from the bamboos; the green hills of Dane's Island further up, and its valleys rich with orange-trees and patches of sugar-cane. Further up still was the village of Wampoa, all sticks and straw like, with a great thing like a lighthouse—what them neggurs calls a pugodour—standing as stiff as a marine at attention, on the opposite bank of the river. And then to see the outlandish-looking mat sails—for devil a boat could you see belonging to them—cutting across in all directions, as if they wor taking a walk in the paddy fields! and the junks cocking up ahead and astern like nothing else in the world, with eyes painted on their bows, because the natural fools think they won't be able to see without them! Then, sir, there's the men with tails like cows, and the women with feet like dolls, and the children in the boats tied to calabashes, to prevent their drowning. Why, bless ye, sir, if ye couldn't swally what I told you before, all this 'll choke ye outright. Well, but to come to my story agen. I hates all this here traverse sailing; I must take a fresh departure. The chief mate of the Prince Royal, Mr Patti-

son, was a riglar out-an-outer, a man as was well knowed in the fleet, and was a favoryte with high and low; for he was a sailor every inch of him, and knowed right well how to keep persons and things in their places. He was a taut hand, too; but none the worse for that, for your true sailor, sir, loves an officer as is a real officer, and gives every man his due, good or bad, without favour or affection — one knows what one has to trust to with such a man. He was quite a pet with the crew, though he made them fly whenever he spoke to them; they were proud of old Charley, as they called him, and of their ship—and high kelter* she was in. Well, sir, old Charley was taken ill—then he got worse —then we heard he wasn't expected to live. There wasn't a man or officer in the fleet but wor sorry for him; for them as hadn't been shipmates with him knowed him by karacter. Of coorse, sir, when the chief mate was in the doctor's hands, and hove down to repair, the second did duty for him. One day, when Charley was very ill, the second mate came on deck, and seed the carpenter a-standing in the sun without his hat on; so says he—

"'Mr Chips,' says he (the carpenters aboard them ships were all warrant-officers, and so always had a handle put to their names)—'Mr Chips, why are you standing in the sun without your hat? You'll be getting a stroke of the sun.'

"'Oh, sir,' said the carpenter, with a face as long as the maintop-bowline, 'it's of little consequence; my time's almost up; I haven't much longer to live.'

"'What do you mean?' said the officer; 'what foolish notion have you taken into yer head?'

"'Oh, sir, it's no foolish notion; *he* told me so, and I never knowed him deceive any one yet!'

"'Who told you so, Chips?' said the mate, kind and soothing like; for he was afeerd that the sun really had

* Kelter—order.

got in at some little crack in his upper works; '*who* told you so?'

"'Mr Pattison himself told me so, sir, last night.'

"'Mr Pattison? Why, Chips, you're dreaming; he's regularly hove down, can't stir hand or foot, poor fellow.'

"'No matter, sir, *he* told me so; and if it wasn't him, it was his ghost.'

"'But how was this, and when?'

"'Why, sir, as I was lying awake last night in my cot, I saw Mr Pattison come into my cabin port. The cot shook under me, I trembled so with fear, for I knew how ill he was; but I thought that, while the fever was at its height, he might have got up and wandered to my cabin without knowing what he was about; so I mustered courage to say to him, 'I am glad to see you on your legs again, sir.' He shook his head mournfully, and said, 'I shall never rise from my bed again; in two days' time my eyes will be closed in death, and in three more you will follow me. He then disappeared, and left me with a weight upon my heart that will sink me to the grave.'

"'Oh, nonsense, Chips,' said the officer; 'don't let your mind dwell upon it. You must have been asleep—it was nothing but a dream.'

"'Dream or not, sir, I feel that I am a doomed man.'

"'Two days after this confab, yer honour, I saw the colours of the Prince Royal slowly rise from the taffirel, as if they didn't like the duty they were on; and then they hung mournfully half-way between deck and the gaff-end: in three minutes, every ship in the fleet had her colours hoisted half-mast, that well-known signal that some officer has struck his flag to death. Poor Charley was no more! A circular was sent from the commodore, to order two boats from every ship in the fleet to attend the funeral—and a grand funeral it was. It was a beautiful sight to see the procession, yer honour. There was the boat, with the coffin

in the starn-sheets, covered with a union-jack; and the mourners sitting on each side of it, towed by one of the Prince's cutters; all her crew in mourning, with black crape round their arms, and pulling minute-strokes. Then came the Prince's launch, towed by another boat, full of the ship's company, who had all asked leave to see the last of their officer. Poor fellows! sincere mourners I believe they were. Then, sir, there was a long line of boats from each quarter of the long-boat, all following in each other's wake, and stretching from one end of the reach to the other. As soon as the boat with the coffin in it shoved off from the Prince, her bell began to toll slowly, and, as it passed the gangway of the next ship, her bell took up the knell, and so on all up the fleet. It was a beautiful sight, yer honour, to see the long lines of boats, with their neat jacks fluttering half-mast from the staffs; the men of each boat dressed alike; some crews in blue jackets, others in white, but all with the crape round their arms: then the flags of all the fleet—English, French, American, and Dutch—waving, mournful-like, half-mast high; not a sound to be heard, yer honour, but the dull sound of the minute-strokes, and the fluttering of the colours, and the long clear tones of the bells, as they died away further and further up the fleet:—oh, sir, it was a sad and a beautiful sight! He was buried, where all the other English officers are buried, on French Island. Well, yer honour, now comes the end of the business. Three days afterwards I was quartermaster of the deck, and was standing on the foksle, when I see'd three boats a-passing, with their jacks half-mast, and a coffin in the starn-sheets of the foremost on 'em; so says I to Tom Rattlin, the captain of the foksle—"Tom," says I, "what boats is them?"—"The Prince's," says he; "I believe her carpenter is dead." And sure enough it was the carpenter, sir; the ghost didn't tell him no lie; his signal for sailing was made at the very time he named. Now, sir, after that yarn, will you tell me that

there are no such things as ghosts? It was my old shipmate, Bill Buntling, that told me; and, if all tales are true, that's no lie.'

"There was no answering such a truism; so I thanked the old man for his yarn, and giving him a stiff'ner,* when the watch was over, turned into my snug cot, little dreaming that I would ever repeat the story on the banks of the Tay."

"Thank ye, Mr Douglas, for your 'yarn,'" said Alice, "I really think you would make as good a 'spinner of yarns,' as you call it, as old Rodney himself."

"What became of old Rodney, did you ever hear?" said Sandford.

"Yes. He was lost from the Dundas Indiaman, poor fellow! some years ago. I used often to be talking of him on board the Dolphin, and Captain Driver told me that he knew the man, and that he had heard his fate. He went out to put additional lashings on the sheet-anchor in a heavy gale of wind, a sea struck the bow, and tore him away while clasping the anchor in his arms. He was swept twenty yards from the ship, poor fellow! at once, and all hopes of saving him were at an end. He was an excellent swimmer, and was seen to take off his pea-jacket with the greatest coolness, and, whenever he rose on the top of a sea, he was seen waving his hat for assistance; at last he was seen on the crest of a sea, but when it rose again Rodney was gone ——"

"Where many a true heart has gone before him!" said Sandford, as the ladies were rising to bid us good-night. "How happy ought you and I to be, Douglas, enjoying all the comforts of a cheerful home, while so many brave fellows are exposed to all the storms and dangers of the deep!"

I *was* happy; I had felt like a new man ever since my

* Strong glass of grog.

visit to Perthshire; a gleam of sunshine had brightened the dark and gloomy path of my life. I was no longer an isolated being—I had met with congenial hearts—I contrasted with gratitude the present with the past, and looked forward with hope to a calm and happy future. I have before spoken of my first impressions of Alice Sandford: I soon learned to look upon her with feelings of warmer interest than I had thought I would ever experience again towards mortal being. I will not waste more words in endeavouring to describe the beauty of a face which, lovely as it was, owed its principal charm to its sweet and amiable expression. That her countenance was a true index to her heart, I have had well-tried experience; for Alice Sandford has been the wife of my bosom for many years, and never, in joy or in sorrow, has she given me a moment's cause to repent of my choice. My friend Sandford (Grant, I should call him) persuaded me to fix my quarters in a handsome villa on his property; and I have ever since had reason to be thankful to Providence for the happiness I have enjoyed, and for the blessed chance that led to my meeting with my friend in the barn at St Boswell's.

THE STORY OF MAY DARLING.

"Lay her i' the earth;
And from her pure and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring!"—HAMLET.

IT is a lovely spot, Grassyvale—"beautiful exceedingly." But its beauty is of a quiet, unimposing description; the characteristic feature of the landscape which would strike the eye of a spectator who surveyed it from the highest neighbouring eminence, is simply—repose. There are no mountains, properly so called, within a circuit of many miles—none of those natural pyramids which, in various parts of our beloved land of mountain and of flood, of battle and of song, rise in majestic grandeur, like columns of adamant to support the vault of heaven. The nearest are situated at such a distance that they appear like clouds, and might readily be mistaken for such, but for their death-like stillness, and the everlasting monotony of their outline. No waterfalls hurl their bolts of liquid crystal into dark, frowning, wave-worn chasms, which had echoed to the thunder of their fall since the birth of time. There is no far-spreading forest—no yawning ravine, with "ebon shades and low-browed rocks"—no beetling cliff or precipice, "shagged" with brushwood, as Milton hath it. There is nothing of the grand, the sublime, the terrible, or the magnificent—there is only quiet; or, if the term do not sound affected to "ears polite," modest, unassuming beauty, such as a rainbow, were it perpetually present in the zenith, might form a characteristic and appropriate symbol of. Nature has not here wrought her miracles of beauty on a Titanic scale. What, then, is so attractive about Grassy-

vale? it will be asked. We are not sure but we may be as much stultified with this question as was the child in Wordsworth's sweet little poem, "We are Seven" (which the reader may turn up at leisure, when the propriety of the comparison will be seen), and may be forced, after an unsuccessful attempt to justify ourselves for holding such an opinion, to maintain, with the same dogmatic obstinacy, it is beautiful. But the length of our story compels us to exclude a description of the landscape which we had prepared.

The village of Grassyvale, which is situated on the margin of a small stream, consists of about one hundred scattered cottages, all neatly whitewashed, and most of them adorned in front with some flowering shrub—wild-briar, honeysuckle, or the like—whilst a "kail-yard" in the rear constitutes no inappropriate appendage. There is one of those dwellings conspicuous from the rest by its standing apart from them, and by an additional air of comfort and neatness which it wears, and which seems to hallow it like a radiant atmosphere. It is literally covered with a network of ivy, honeysuckle, and jasmine, the deep green of whose unvarnished leaf renders more conspicuous "the bright profusion of its scattered stars." The windows are literally darkened by a multitude of roses, which seem clustering and crowding together to gain an entrance, and scatter their "perfumed sweets" around the apartment. Near the cottage, there is also a holly planted—that evergreen-tree which seems providentially designed by nature to cheer the dreariness of winter, and, when all is withered and desolate around, to remain a perpetual promise of spring. But we have more to do with this beautiful little dwelling than merely to describe its exterior.

Behind Grassyvale, the ground begins to swell, undulating into elevations of mild acclivity, on the highest of which stands the parish church, like the ark resting on Ararat—

faith's triumph, and mercy's symbol. Numerous grassy hillocks scattered around indicate the cemetery where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." Amongst those memorials which are designed to perpetuate the recollection of virtue for a few generations—and which, with their appropriate emblems and inscriptions, preach so eloquently to the heart, and realise to the letter Shakspere's memorable words, "sermons in stones"—there is one which always attracts attention. It is not a "storied urn, an animated bust" —one of those profusely decorated marble hatchments with which worldly grandeur mourns, in pompous but vain magnificence, over departed pride. No; it is only a small, unadorned slab of rather dingy-coloured freestone; and the inscription is simply—"To the memory of May Darling, who was removed from this world to a better, at the early age of nineteen. She was an affectionate daughter, a loving sister, and a sincere Christian.

> 'Weep not for her whose mortal race is o'er;
> She is not lost, but only gone before.'"

Ah! there are few, few indeed, for many miles round, who would pass that humble grave without heaving a sigh or shedding a tear for her who sleeps beneath—her who was so beloved, so admired by every one, as well as being the idol and pride of her own family, and whose romantic and untimely fate (cut off "i' the morn and liquid dew of youth") was the village talk for many a day.

John Darling, the father of our heroine, was, what is no great phenomenon amongst the peasantry of Scotland, a sober, industrious, honest man. In early life he espoused the daughter of an opulent farmer, whose marriage-portion enabled him to commence life under very favourable auspices. But, in spite of obedience to the natural laws, the mildew of misfortune will blight our dearest hopes, however wisely our plans for the future may be laid, and however assiduously and judiciously they may be pursued.

Untoward circumstances, which it would unnecessarily protract our narrative to relate, had reduced him, at the period to which our tale refers, to the condition of a field-labourer. Death had likewise been busy singling out victims from amongst those who surrounded his humble but cheerful fireside; and of a large family there only remained three, and he was a widower besides. May was the eldest; and, accordingly, the superintendence of the household devolved upon her. The deceased parent was of a somewhat haughty and reserved turn of mind, for the recollection of former affluence never forsook her; and this circumstance kept her much aloof from the less polished and sophisticated matrons of the village, and also rendered her a strict family disciplinarian. She concentrated her mind almost entirely upon the affairs of her own household; and her children were accordingly watched with a more vigilant eye, and brought up with more scrupulous care, than was usual with those around her. It was her pride, and "let it be her praise," to see them arrayed in more showy habiliments than those worn by their associates; and, to accomplish this darling object, what serious transmutation did her finery of former days undergo, as the mutilated robes descended from child to child, turned upside down, inside out, and otherwise suffering a metamorphosis at every remove! The dress of May, in particular—her first-born bud of bliss, the doated on of her bosom—was always attended to with special care; nor was the cultivation of her mind in any way overlooked. She very early inspired her with a love of reading, which increased with the development of her faculties, and many a day survived her by whom the passion had been awakened.

In person, May was slender; but her light, airy, sylph-like form was eminently handsome. Hair and eyes of intense depth of black contrasted admirably with a countenance which may be designated as transparent—it was

nearly colourless; and only on occasions of unusual bodily exertion, or when some mental emotion suffused the cheek with a damask blush, would a tint of rosy red fluctuate over her pure skin. It can scarcely be called pale, however—it had nothing about it of that death-in-life hue which indicates the presence of disease.

"Oh, call it *fair*, not pale!"

The expression was at once amiable and intellectual—mellowed or blended, however, with a pensiveness which is usually, but most erroneously, called melancholy. Melancholy had nothing to do with a "mind at peace with all below—a heart whose love was innocent." The countenance, in general, affords an index of the mental character—it takes its "form and pressure," as it were, from the predominant workings of that inward principle which is the source of thought and feeling. It is there that thought and feeling, those subtle essences, are made visible to the eye—it is there that mind may be seen. The most casual observer could not fail to perceive that the soul which spoke eloquently in the eye, "and sweetly lightened o'er the face," of May Darling, was a worshipper of nature, of poetry, and of virtue; for they are often combined—they have a natural relation to one another; and, when they exist simultaneously in one individual, a mind so constituted has a capacity for enjoying the most exalted pleasure of which humanity is susceptible. May Darling was indeed imaginative and sanguine in a very high degree; and books of a romantic or dramatic character were mines of "untold wealth" to her.

"Many are poets who have never penn'd
Their inspirations."

And, although the name of this rural beauty, this humble village maiden, will be looked for in vain in the rolls of fame, she enjoyed hours of intense poetical inspiration. In

short, both in her mental character and in the style of her personal attractions, she rose far above her companions of the village. Need it be told, that often, of a fine evening, she would steal away from her gay, romping, laughing associates, and, with a favourite author in her hand, and wrapped in a vision of "*sweet* coming fancies," follow the course of the stream which intersected her native vale, flowing along, pure and noiseless, like the current of her own existence?

The favourite haunt in which she loved to spend her leisure hours was a beautiful dell, distant about half-a-mile from the village. It was a place so lonely, so lovely, so undisturbed, that there (but then all these fine old rural deities, those idols shrined for ages in nature's own hallowed Pantheon, have been expelled their temples, or broken by science—why should this be?)—there, if anywhere, the genius of solitude might be supposed to have fixed her abode. It was a broken piece of ground, intersected by several irregular banks, here projecting in hoar and sterile grandeur (not on an Alpine scale, however), and there clothed with tufts of the feathery willow or old gnarled thorn. The earth was carpeted with its usual covering of emerald turf; and interwoven with it, in beautiful irregularity, were numerous wild flowers—the arum, with its speckled leaves and lilac blossoms; the hyacinth, whose enamelled blue looks so charmingly in the light of the setting sun; and oxlips, cowslips, and the like—throwing up their variegated tufts, like nosegays presented by nature for some gentle creature like May Darling to gather up and lay upon her bosom. The air, of course, was permanently impregnated with the perfume which they breathed out—the everlasting incense of the flowers rising from the altars of nature to her God. Such was the sanctuary in which May gleaned from books the golden thoughts of others, or held communion with her own; and well was it adapted for

nursing a romantic taste, and giving a tenderer tone to every tender feeling.

The personal attractions of this sweet and lovely creature increased with her years, and she became the reigning belle of Grassyvale and all the country round. It followed, as a matter of course, that her admirers outnumbered her years; and that the possession of her affections was, with many a rustic Adonis, a subject which troubled the little kingdom of the soul, like the Babylonish garment. At every village fête—a wedding, a harvest-home, or other rural festival—hers was the step most buoyant in the dance, hers the hand most frequently solicited, hers the form and face that riveted all eyes, and thrilled the heart of the ardent admirer "too much adoring." Amongst the other accomplishments of our heroine, skill in music was not the least prominent. Not that she excelled in those intricate graces which are often had recourse to by vocalists to conceal a bad voice, and atone for want of feeling and expression; but her "wood-note wild" was eminently characterised by the latter qualities of singing; and the effect which she produced was accordingly calculated to be lasting.

It must not be supposed, however, that the flattering unction of adulation, at best like the love of Kaled to Lara, "but half-concealed," had any pernicious influence over her mind. She was neither puffed up with vain conceit, nor display of haughty reserve and distance towards those who numbered fewer worshippers than herself; still humility of heart, which was "native there, and to the manner born," characterised her deportment; nor was there any relaxation in the discharge of the household duties which devolved upon her; and the comfort of her father, and the proper care and culture of the younger branches of the family, were as faithfully attended to as if her deformity, instead of her beauty, had been proverbial. She folded the little flutterers under her wing, like a mother bird; and, if

there was one thing more than another that she took delight in, it was the training of their young minds to the love and practice of virtue and religion—the only fountains whence happiness, pure and uncontaminated, can be drawn in this life.

> "So pass'd their life—a clear united stream,
> By care unruffled; till, in evil hour ——"

But we anticipate.

It was on a fine summer morning that May, with one of her little sisters, set out to visit the annual fair of the county town. Such an event naturally excites considerable interest over all the country round; and old and young, blind and cripple, male and female, pour along the public ways—not in "weary" but in lighthearted "droves"—full of eagerness and expectation, like the Jews to the Pool of Bethesda, when the angel was expected to make his annual descent, and impart a healing virtue to its waters; for there there is to be found variety of amusement for every mind—from the Katerfelto wonderer, "wondering for his bread," down to the more humble establishment of the halfpenny showman, with his "glorious victory of Waterloo," his "golden beetle," or "ashes from the burning mountains." But, on the occasion to which we refer, there was an exhibition in the shape of a theatrical booth, which presented extraordinary attractions for May Darling; and, accordingly, after deliberately balancing the gratification which she anticipated with the expense which it would cost (her exchequer was, of course, not very rich), she at length found herself comfortably seated near the front of the stage. The tragedy of "George Barnwell" was going off with prodigious *eclat;* and the performers had arrived at that scene where the hero is about to assassinate his uncle, when the insecure props that supported the gallery began to indicate a disposition to disencumber themselves of their burden, and at last finally gave way. The confusion which now ensued,

not to mention the shrieks and other vocal notes of terror and dismay, it is needless to describe—these have nothing to do with our tale. Barnwell, instead of imbruing his hands in innocent blood, even "in jest," became the most active agent in rescuing his hapless audience from their perilous situation. He was a tall, handsome young man, of a very prepossessing exterior, and appeared to great advantage in his showy stage habiliments. The general rush was towards the door, the most likely avenue of escape which presented itself to the astonished rustics; but a few, amongst whom was our heroine, with more collected judgment and presence of mind, found a place of security on the stage. May was slightly bruised in her endeavours to shelter her young charge; and, although not much injured, her forlorn yet interesting appearance drew the attention of the histrionic Samaritan, and he kindly conducted her into the back settlements of the theatre. The affair was not of such a serious nature as might have been anticipated. A few dilapidated seats, and a score or two of trifling contusions, made up the sum total of the damage. A hat or two might have changed owners in the confusion; but these are things beneath the dignity of a tragedian to look after; and, as soon as matters were adjusted on the grand theatre of commotion, he returned to the object of his first solicitude. She was seated on a stool in what was dignified with the sounding appellation of a green-room—looking paler, and lovelier, and more loveable than ever. He quieted her apprehensions with respect to the catastrophe; for he was an adept in the art of imitation, and politely requested the honour of conducting her to her place of residence. It is not difficult to conceive what was the first impression which the request made upon the mind of May Darling; but the scruples of modest, virgin innocence yielded at last to the importunities of the actor, and they left the scene of mirth and confusion together.

On their journey homewards, the conversation naturally turned upon the drama; and many a fine passage, which May admired, was recited to her with all the eloquence and stage artifice which the actor was master of. And he would speak feelingly of "the gentle lady married to the Moor"—her love—the love of Desdemona, pure, exalted, all-enduring, such as death alone could quench—her wo and her fate, so replete with all that can agonise the human soul, and awaken its profoundest sympathies;—of Ophelia—"the fair Ophelia," the young, the beautiful, and the gentle—her devoted, child-like affection, her mournful distraction, and her untimely doom;—of Miranda, the island bride—the being of enchantment—half-earthly, half-heavenly—around whom the spirits of the air hovered, and ministered unto as vassals;—of Imogen, the fair and faithful—the patient, long-suffering, and finally fortunate Imogen;—of Cordelia—she of the seraph-spirit, pure and peaceful—whose love for a father surpassed that of the Roman daughter;—of Perdita, "the prettiest low-born lass that ever ran on the greensward"—the shepherdess and the princess;—of Juliet—the martyr of passion—she who drew poison from earth's sweetest flower, love, and died thereby; by love's own flame "kindled she was and blasted." These, and many other creations of fancy, which omnipotent genius has rendered almost real historical personages—not shadow, but substance—were the topics of discourse which were handled by our hero of the buskin, until the cottage of John Darling was reached. From the description which has been given of May's character, it need be no matter of surprise that the impression made upon her gentle bosom was profound; and, on taking leave of her, a request on the part of Mr Henry Wilkinson (such was the tragedian's name) to be permitted to visit her on some future occasion, made under cover of a pretext to inquire after the state of her health, was acceded to. Again and again Mr Wilkinson visited the

cottage, and poured into the ear of the humble, unsuspecting, and happy inmate many a story of love, and hope, and joy—such as his knowledge of the drama, which was great, supplied him with.

> "These things to hear
> Would Desdemona seriously incline;
> But still the house affairs would draw her thence;
> Which ever as she could with haste despatch
> She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
> Devour up his discourse."

Substitute the name of May Darling for that of Desdemona, and the description becomes perfect of our heroine's situation, whilst the result was similar: in a short time, the happiness of our village maiden was entirely at the disposal of Mr Wilkinson. Hitherto her heart had slept, like some untroubled lake, reflecting only heaven, and nature grand and beautiful around; but now its waters were darkened and disturbed by one single image—and that was her lover's. Her ears were no longer open to the murmurs of her native stream, or the gush of song of the fairy-winged and fairy-plumaged birds, whom she almost knew one from another: she only heard the music of her lover's voice. Her secluded dell was no longer visited alone: her walks were no longer solitary, or, if they were, it was only to meet him whom her heart loved, and to see if his speed "kept pace with her expectancy." Everything was beheld through one all-hallowing atmosphere—and that was love. It lay upon her soul like the shadow on the sundial, and time was measured by it. How, it will be asked, was all this looked upon by her father? With no favourable eye—nay, with many suspicious forebodings and prophetic fears.

It was about three months after the catastrophe which took place in the provincial theatre, that Mr Wilkinson made proposals of a union to May, which, being accepted, the consent of her parent was next applied for. The ad-

vances of the actor were for a time checked by an uncompromising refusal; but May's father gradually became less peremptory, until there remained only one objection, but that was insurmountable—namely, the profession of Mr Wilkinson—one, in general, very obnoxious to a Scottish peasant. It was, however, finally obviated, by the actor's promising to abandon it, and become a teacher of elocution in the town of H——. The father's consent was obtained at last, though with reluctance, and the day of their nuptials was fixed.

It was a beautiful evening, that which preceded the day when May Darling was to give her hand to the man for whom her heart cherished a love as deep, intense, and concentrated, as ever was awakened and nursed in woman's gentle bosom. The sun—just sinking through those vast masses of clouds which usually attend his exit, and assume, as he descends, various wild and fantastical shapes, and catch every hue, from the intense purple to the scarcely perceptible yellow—showered on the face of nature a stream of rich but mellowed radiance, which softened without obliterating the outlines of objects, and produced that "clear obscure, so softly dark, so darkly pure," which is so favourable to indulgence in tender emotions.

"Sweet hour that wakes the wish and melts the heart!"—sweet hour, when reflection is deepest and feeling most profound—when the mind, abroad all day, busied with the concerns of this work-a-day world, comes home to itself, and broods, and sleeps, and dreams golden dreams—sunny, hope-illumined dreams!—sweet hour, when the ties of social being which the day had severed are reunited, and around the household hearth the "old familiar faces" are assembled!—sweet hour, when the shades of evening, gradually deepening, are sufficient to conceal the blush which might mantle beauty's cheek, too warmly, fondly pressed, as, in a voice half-sighs, half-whispers, she confesses the secret of

her love; and when, in the arms which gently enfold her yielding form, she seems, in the fine language of Rogers, to become less and less earthly,

"And fades at last into a spirit from heaven!"

'Twas at this enchanting hour that Wilkinson and his betrothed set out on one of those charming walks during which they had so often exchanged vows of mutual and eternal love. The road which they at first took was sufficiently retired to admit of their conversing aloud with unreserved confidence; but, continuing their journey, unconscious where they were going, they found themselves at last in the vicinity of the high road which leads to the town of H——. Turning to strike down a narrow hedgerow path, a moving spectacle presented itself to their observation. Upon a grassy knoll lay a female fast asleep, with a child at her breast, vainly attempting to force its little fingers within the folds of the handkerchief which concealed the bosom of its mother. May uttered a faint exclamation, somewhat between pity and fear; for she was taken by surprise. But her lover's astonishment was still greater than hers; for, after he had contemplated the careworn features of the wayfarer, he started, and, had not the increasing gloom of evening prevented any change of countenance from being perceptible, May might have seen his face turn ashy pale; but she felt the arm in which hers was fondly locked tremble distinctly.

"This touches your feelings, Henry," said May; "but can we not, love, do something to alleviate the sufferings of this, no doubt, unfortunate female? Had I not better awake her, and conduct her to my father's, where refreshment and rest can be procured?"

"Nay, dearest love," said Wilkinson; "sleep is to the wretched the greatest boon that can be bestowed: let us leave her alone, nor deprive her of the only comfort which, possibly, she is capable of enjoying."

So saying, he hastily retired, bearing May, somewhat re-

luctantly, homewards; for her sympathy was much excited, and she would fain have carried her generous purpose into effect; but gave way to the entreaties of her lover, who had some miles to walk ere he could reach his place of residence. After seeing May safely beneath the domestic roof, Wilkinson bade farewell for the night to his betrothed bride, and took his departure, with the intention, he said, of immediately returning to H——. He did not proceed directly home, however; but, making a retrograde movement, he fell back upon the place where the fatigued traveller had been seen. She was gone when he arrived; and whether the circumstance gave him pleasure or the reverse, we have never been able to ascertain; but, at all events, he now set out in good earnest for H——. What should have interested Wilkinson so much in this apparently wandering mendicant?—*Pacienza.*

On the evening which we have described, let the reader picture to himself two aged crones, comfortably seated upon a rough slab of wood, elevated two feet or so above the ground, by a massive block of granite which supported either end. This, together with the cottage wall against which their backs reclined, might, even with individuals more fastidious than its present occupants, have appeared a luxury little inferior to a sofa, especially in that bland and beautiful hour when daylight dies along the hills, and our feelings, partaking of the softness of the scene and hour, dispose us to be pleased, we ask not why, and care not wherefore. On either hand was situated a door, over which hung suspended a very homely signboard. From one of these the wayfarer might learn that good entertainment for man and beast could be supplied within, by Janet Baird, who, it appeared, was, by special permission of government, permitted to retail spirits, porter, ale, and other items. Lest any mistake should occur as to the nature of the invitation (or perhaps it was a ruse to provoke the alimentary facul-

ties), there was a painting of the interior, representing a table, which seemed to groan under the weight of bottles, glasses, porter and ale cans, bread, cheese, and what not; whilst two jolly companions, with rubicund faces, where an infinity of good-nature predominated, sat round it, each with a cup in hand, and both evidently sublimed by their potations far above this "dirty planet, the earth." At the entrance to the apartment was seen the landlady, who with one hand pushed open the door, whilst the other, projecting forwards, supported a huge tankard, charged with the favourite beverage, which mantled or effloresced at the top like a cauliflower. The neighbouring sign had fewer attractions for the weary traveller or the droughty villager, throwing out merely hints as to the condition of the reader's linen, by intimating that clothes might here undergo purification, and be mangled by the hour or *peace* (such was the orthography) by Nelly Gray.

The two neighbours lived on terms of the utmost harmony; for there was no rivalry of interests. Their callings were antipodes to each other—one being devoted to the decoration and comfortable appearance of the human exterior, whilst the other took special cognisance of the internal condition of the animal economy. They, of course, carried on a mutual traffic; but it was on the primitive principle of barter—the weekly account for washing and dressing which Janet owed being duly balanced by her accommodating Nelly with a certain potent nostrum, which we shall not name, but merely describe as a sovereign remedy for aching bones and pains, and other complaints of the stomach, to which this petticoat Diogenes (for she likewise practised in a tub) was very subject, especially after washing a whole day, or impelling her crazy, creaking machine for the same space of time. It was their invariable practice to spend an hour or two every evening in what is termed in the vernacular a "twa-handed crack," either seated out-doors, or snugly in-

mured in Janet's back parlour—a small dark room, encumbered with sundry articles of retail. The subject of their conversation, on the present occasion, will immediately become apparent.

"They say he's gaun to learn folk ellykeashun," said Janet, in reference to May's lover.

"And what's that, Janet?" asked the other.

"Ne'er a bit o' me kens very weel," rejoined Janet; "but I'm thinkin it's the way the gentry speak, eghin and owin, and sichin and sabbin, and makin yer voice gang up and doun, like daft Jock playin on the fife."

"Ay! ay! that's an idle kind o' way o' makin anc's bread," sighed Nelly. "It's naething else than beggin. He'd better pit a nappin-hammer in his hand, and tak the roadside for an honest livelihood."

"'Deed, Nelly, it's my opinion he's been on the road before, followin anither trade," said Janet. "I'm sair mistaen if he's no a hempie; and we'll maybe hear mair aboot him yet than some folks wad like to ken o'. I never liked your land-loupers and spoutin gentry a' my days. They're nae better than tinklers, that carry aff whatever they lay their hands on, nae matter whether it's beast or body. It cowes the gowan hoo sae sensible a man as John Darling wad e'er hae looten his dochter tak up wi' sic-like clamjamphrey. But he was aye owre easy wi' his family, and gied them owre muckle o' their ain wull frae the first. But the mother was sair to blame in pittin sic daft-like notions intil a bairn's head as to read playactorin books and novels. Wae am I to say sae, noo that she's whar the Lord wull."

"Is't true, Janet, that they're to be coupled i' the kirk?" asked Nelly. "They say the minister's taen an unco likin to the lad; and, to mak things look as genteel as possible, he's offered the use o' the kirk for marryin them in; and's to gie them a ploy forbye, after it's a' owre."

"Guid faith, it's a true sayin, 'The fat sow gets a' the

draff,'" rejoined Janet. "It wad be lang or he did a turn like that for ony puir body like oorsels. The birkie doesna stand in need o' cash; for he gies saxpence to this ane, and a shillin to the tither ane, for gangin errans. He micht hae provided something for the waddin folks doun at Michael Crummie's, whase tred's no sae brisk noo, sin' that kick-up wi' him and the mason-lodge folk, wha swore he gied them up ill whusky—and that was maybe nae lee. He ne'er, since ever I mind, keepit the real stuff, like that o' mine. But see, Nelly, whatna puir, waebegone-lookin cratur's that comin alang the road, scarcely able to trail ae leg after anither? and a bairn, too, help us a'!"

The object which drew the attention of the honest ale-wife was, as the reader may have already sagaciously conjectured, the same forlorn being whom May Darling and her lover had accidentally encountered. With a slow and faltering step she approached the village dames, and inquired of them how far it was from the town of H——.

"Five miles guid," said Janet Baird, and continued—"But ye'll no think o' gaun there the nicht; it's gettin dark, and ye've mair need o' a while's rest; and maybe ye wadna be the waur o' something to support nature; for, wae's me! ye do look thin and hungert like! Tak her in by, Nelly, and I'll fetch her some cordial, as weel as a morsel to eat."

So saying, she proceeded to her shop, for the purpose of making good her word, whilst Nelly followed up that part of the duty of relieving the stranger which devolved upon her, and conducted the "wearied one" into the interior of her humble domicile.

"Ye'll hae travelled a gey bit the day, na, I sudna wonder?" said Nelly.

"Yes," said the stranger, whom we shall now designate as Mrs B——. "Since morning I have prosecuted my journey with all the speed which want and weariness

would permit of. But these were nothing, did I only know how it was to terminate."

Meantime Janet had returned, bearing in her apron an ample stock of provisions; and, having heard the latter part of Mrs B——'s reply to Nelly, her curiosity was not a little excited to know something of her history. This she set about with the characteristic *pawkiness* (there is no purely English word sufficiently expressive) of the Scotch—that style of speaking which is half-asking, half-answering a question; and she was successful in her endeavours.

"It'll be the guidman that ye're gaun to meet at H——?" said Janet. "He'll be in the manufacturing line, nae doot; for there's little else dune there; and, indeed, that itsel has faun sair aff sin' that dirt o' machinery was brocht in to tak the bread oot o' the puir man's mou."

"Yes—no; he is not in that line, nor do I know, indeed, if he is to be found there at all. But—but—excuse me, kind friends, for showing a little reserve touching one who ——"

Here, however, her feelings overcame her; and, turning round to gaze on the helpless being that clung to her bosom, tears from her suffused eyes began to find a ready passage down her pale emaciated cheek—a channel with which they appeared to be familiar.

"He never saw thee, my little Henry, my sweet boy! Methinks, that cherub smile of innocence which lies upon that countenance would be powerful enough to melt the icy feelings of his soul, and recall ——. Pardon me, kind friends," she continued; "but the name of husband is associated in my mind with all that human nature can suffer of unmitigated, hopeless wretchedness. You see before you the victim of ——. But you shall hear all."

She then commenced her history, recounting every circumstance of a tale of misery but too common. As it is in some measure connected with that of May Darling, we shall give a few of its leading facts.

She was the daughter of a respectable farmer in the north of England, and, being an only child, received an accomplished education; and, from her engaging manners, personal attractions, and skill in music, she was much courted, even by those who moved in the higher circles. At the house of a neighbouring clergyman, Mr G——, she was a very frequent visiter; and her charms captivated the heart of Dr G——, a young medical gentleman, and the nephew of the clergyman. On her part, however, there was no attachment, although the ardour with which Dr G—— pressed his suit might have captivated a bosom less stubborn than hers. But another idol was shrined and secretly worshipped there. This was a Mr Henry Bolton, a fellow-student of Dr G——'s, who, in calling at the house of Mr G—— to see his friend the doctor, was induced to spend a few days with him. His stay was protracted to weeks, months—in short, till the farmer's daughter and he, having come to an understanding with respect to the all-important matter of love, agreed to join hands for better, for worse. The marriage took place at a neighbouring town, where the couple remained for several months, living in a state of great privacy, for no one was in the secret of their union, not even the lady's father. The finances of Mr Bolton became exhausted; and a letter from his father having shut out all hope of succour from that quarter, he was thrown into a state of extreme dejection. His temper soured, and harshness towards his wife soon followed; for an application on her part to her father, to whom she was compelled by necessity to reveal her situation, met with a reception similar to the other. One day, he dressed himself with more than usual care, packed up in a small parcel the principal part of his body-clothes, and having told his wife that he meant to go as far as ——, naming a considerable town, which was situated at some miles distance, parted from her, like Ajut in "The Rambler," never to return. The sun arose and set,

and arose again and again, and week after week, but still he came not; nor was she ever able to obtain the faintest trace of him. Her health began to droop, and, in the depth of her humiliation and misery, like the prodigal of old, she was compelled to seek for shelter under the paternal roof. Her father received her even with kindness; for time, the softener of affliction, the soother of wrath, had not passed over his head without exercising its due influence upon his feelings. Here she gave birth to a child, the baby which now lay at her breast. Time passed away, and still no intelligence of her runaway husband reached her, till, "about a week back," she said, "communication was made me by letter, that, if I would repair to the town of H——, I would hear something of my lost husband. Without the knowledge of my father, I have undertaken the journey; and God alone knows whether the information, so mysteriously conveyed to me, be true or false—whether my hopes will be disappointed or realised. A few hours, however, will be sufficient to set my mind at rest. I have wearied you, I fear; but my present wretched appearance required some explanation on my part—for, oh, it is difficult to lie under the suspicion of being a vagrant or vagabond, as Heaven knows I am neither." And, clasping her hands and raising her eyes, she remained for a few minutes in that reverential but death-like attitude which is assumed when a human soul prays in agony.

Her painful narrative had its due influence upon the minds of those to whom it was addressed; and, although both admitted the propriety of proceeding to the town of H——, yet they earnestly exhorted her to remain with them for a night; and to this proposal she acceded. After breakfast next morning, Mrs B—— (who must now be looked upon as one of the principal of our *dramatis personæ*) set out for the town of H——. What the nature of her reflections were, as she drew near the termination of her journey, may be readily conceived; but of their intensity, no idea can be

formed by any one except by the brokenhearted female who has passed through the same fiery ordeal of desertion and despair. She had arrived within a short distance of the town, when a chaise, driving rapidly down the principal entrance to it, attracted her attention. It approached, and from the favours which profusely adorned the driver, his team, and his vehicle, it was evident that some happy pair were destined soon to become its occupants. The blinds were all drawn up; but, as the chaise passed her, one of them was partially let down, and she heard some one from within instruct the driver to proceed to the manse by a road more retired than that usually taken. There was something in the tone of the voice (though indistinctly heard from the rattling of the wheels) which startled Mrs B—— from a reverie in which she had been indulging, and made every fibre of her body to thrill, as if an electric discharge had shot through it. In mute astonishment, not unmingled with thick-coming fancies, horrible forebodings, which, without assuming any definite form, were prophetic of wo, she fixed her eyes upon the retiring vehicle, and, rooted to the spot where she stood, motionless as a Niobe of stone, gazed and gazed till her eyeballs ached. "Can it be?" she at last exclaimed, with wild emotion—"can it be?—No—no—'tis but fancy; yet the place!—gracious powers!" Her eyes continued to follow the retiring wheels, fixed upon them she knew not by what mysterious power; and long she might have remained in this position, had not some person from behind softly addressed her. She turned round, and her eyes fell upon her former suitor, Dr G——. Let her astonishment be imagined—we will not attempt to give words to her feelings.

"It is to you, then," she said, after recovering from her surprise—"it is to you, Dr G——, that I am indebted for information regarding my lost husband."

"It is," he replied; "but not a moment is to be lost.

Things are in a worse condition than they were when I despatched my letter to you. But let us proceed instantly to Grassyvale. On the way I will inform you of all that has come to my knowledge regarding that monster—it were a profanation of language to call him husband."

So saying, they commenced their journey, which we shall leave them to prosecute whilst we bring up some parts of our narrative which have been necessarily left in the rear.

We need hardly say that the morning of her marriage was an anxious and a busy one to May Darling. It is true that she had plenty of assistance afforded her by the village matrons, and by a few youthful associates, whom she had singled out as especial favourites, from amongst many who were regarded by her with affection. But still a fastidiousness of taste always seizes people on those occasions when they are desirous of appearing to the best advantage. Besides, when there are a number of lady's-maids, all busily engaged in decorating a single individual, a difference of opinion relative to the various items of dress always takes place, and occasions much delay. One of them is clear that such and such a colour of riband will best suit the complexion of the wearer; another holds out strongly for an opposite hue; and a third silences them both by asserting that neither answer the colour of the bonnet. What sort of flowers would most fittingly ornament the hair was also a subject of protracted debate; and half-an-hour was wasted in determining whether the riband which was to circle her waist like a zone should hang down or not. Matters, however, were at last adjusted—the bride was arrayed, the hour of twelve was struck by a small wooden clock which ticked behind the door; and with the hour there arrived at the cottage a sort of rude palanquin, fashioned of birch-tree boughs, which intertwisted with each other, and were interwoven with branches of flowering shrubs; and upon this some of the kindest and blithest-hearted of the villagers

had agreed to bear May to the kirk. Some modest scruples required to be overcome before she would be induced to avail herself of this mode of conveyance; and, after being seated, with the bridesmaid walking on one side, and John Darling on the other, the cavalcade began to move. Many hearty good wishes for the happiness of the bride from the elder people, and many joyous shouts from the younger part of the villagers, greeted the ears of the marriage party; whilst a pretty long train which drew itself out in the rear, sent up its rejoicings on the wind from a distance. But one step must bring us to the altar of Hymen. Side by side stood the bridegroom and the bride; and a more interesting, handsome, and apparently well-matched pair, never were seen in the same situation, as we are informed by the clergyman who officiated on the occasion. The ceremony proceeded with due formality—one moment more would have joined their hands, when a person who had just entered the church called to the clergyman to stay the nuptials; and, at the same moment, a shriek from a female who had entered along with him, rose so wild, thrilling, and distracted, that every bosom shook beneath its glittering attire.

"Base, inhuman miscreant!" shouted Dr G——, addressing himself to Wilkinson (which name must now be supplanted by his real one, Bolton), at the same time rushing forward to seize the bridegroom.

He, however, had ere this dropped the hand of May Darling—that hand which, till now, like Desdemona's, had "felt no age, nor known no sorrow"—and, unsheathing a dagger which was concealed about his person (doubtless one of his theatrical weapons), he threatened to make a ghost of any one who disputed his retreat from the church. His menacing attitude and wild gesticulations terrified every beholder, and even Dr G—— gave way, allowing him unmolested to quit the sacred place which he was about to pro-

fane, and possibly might have stained with blood. Only one attempted to arrest him, and for a short time succeeded. It was his wife—she who the night previously had kindled up in his soul the fires of conscience, as she lay asleep, unsheltered save by heaven's blue canopy, and apparently an abandoned outcast.

"Henry," she said, holding up their child, and stretching forth her arms—"Henry, look on this dear pledge of our affection, the child of love, though born in bitterness and tears, the offspring of your choice—look on him, Henry, and let the voice of conscience in your breast, which must be heard now or hereafter, plead in his behalf. The helpless darling innocent—of what crime has he been guilty, that his natural protector should cast him forth to meet the buffetings of fate without a shield—that he should be launched upon the sea of life without an oar? If not for my sake, at least for the sake of little Henry—for he bears your name—restore us both to honour and society, by returning to the path of duty. The arms that have so often embraced you will again encircle the neck to which they have clung so often and so fondly. O Henry, Henry! reflect for an instant on my destitute outcast condition—without you, I am a weed cast from the rock, to be driven whithersoever the storm sets wildest. Think what my sufferings have been and must be!—God alone can estimate them. Henry, hear me. Stay but one instant—Henry, Henry!" And, taking her child in one arm, she stretched out the other to detain him; but the heartless villain shook her rudely from him, and darted from the church.

What were May Darling's feelings during this heartrending scene? She was not a spectator of it. The moment that the dreadful truth flashed upon her mind, she sank into the arms of her father, dead to consciousness and time. By the same conveyance which had brought her in triumph to the church, covered with the insignia of happiness, and

palpitating with rapture almost too intense for the human soul to enjoy for any length of time without experiencing pain and a revolution of feeling—by that same conveyance, not an hour after, she was borne to her father's cottage, a wretched, but a gentle maniac.

Days, weeks, months, passed away, and she remained the same listless, mild, and inoffensive creature—a baby-woman, a human being ripe in years, and an infant in thought, feeling, and everything mental. 'Tis painful to contemplate the situation of an individual overwhelmed by such a calamity under any circumstances; but, under the present, how terrible indeed! To be struck down at the altar, arrayed in bridal robes, and with all her hopes blooming around her—how does it humble human pride, set at nought all calculations of human happiness, and assign narrow limits to human hope! And yet there was mercy in the dispensation. Better unconscious almost of existence itself, than alive to all the horrors of a doom like that of May Darling. Better the vacant stare, and the look of silent indifference on all beneath the sun, than the wild gesticulations of violent grief, the shriek of wo, or the agony of despair, for the alleviation of which "hope never comes that comes to all."

Every means were had recourse to for rousing her from the dismal trance into which she had fallen, to dispel from her thoughts the gloomy, the dead images by which they were haunted—but in vain. Sometimes she would sit amongst her gay companions; and, whilst they laughed, chatted, and sung, as in former happy days, a faint smile would rekindle about her lips, so rosy once, so wan and withered now, and for a moment playing like a mental coruscation, would suddenly expire, and then she would droop again into the gloom of moody madness, and weep amidst all the gaiety that surrounded her—weep even like a child. If spoken to, she made no reply; but, lifting up her dark streaming eyes, sparkling through the humid

medium in which they were suffused, like a star in motionless water, she would sing snatches of old songs about disappointed love, blighted hopes, and broken hearts. And the melancholy tones of her voice would sadden all around her, as if some powerful spell had suddenly passed over their minds like a cold wind, and frozen up the fount of joyous feeling; and they would weep too—weep along with her; for she was so beloved, so good, so beautiful, so happy once, and so wobegone and wretched now. Then would the gentle maniac start up on a sudden, as if some one had hastily summoned her, and, rushing towards home, would mutter, in a quick tone of voice—"I am coming—I am coming! I knew we would be in time!—I knew we would be in time! He is there!—he—he!—— Who?" She was silent now. Many an eye was filled with tears as she passed through the straggling village of Grassyvale.

Winter had passed away; the vernal eruption of spring had been matured into the bloom and the promise which spring gives of autumn, when May Darling one evening wandered forth from her father's cottage, attended only by a little sister. Striking into that beautiful and unfrequented path where she had last walked with him who, on the following day, was to have become her husband, she had arrived at the very spot where lay asleep on the grassy bank by the hedge-side the wife of Bolton. A train of thought seemed suddenly to rush through her mind; for she sat, or rather dropped, gently down. 'Twas the recollection of former events which had begun to be reanimated within her; and, though faint, it was sufficient to cause a temporary suspension of muscular energy: her sight became dim, only vague images being presented to the eye; and she might probably have fallen backwards, had not a person sprung through the hedge, and, putting his arms around her slender form, maintained her in an erect position. The individual who had thus so opportunely come to

her assistance was closely wrapped up in a greatcoat, although the warmth of the weather rendered such a covering scarcely necessary. The upper part of his countenance was concealed by a slouched hat drawn pretty far down; but from what of it was visible, it was plain that care, remorse, and dissipation had gone far to modify its natural expression.

May gradually revived from her partial swoon; and the stranger, uncovering his head, and fixing his eyes upon the languid features which began to assume the hue of life and the expression of conscious being, said, in a low, trembling voice—

"May Darling, hear me—do not curse me—I am miserable enough without the malison of her whom ——" But his feelings, for a moment, choked his utterance. "Through a thousand dangers and difficulties have I sought this interview, only that I might obtain your forgiveness, and acceptance of this small gift." Here he flung a purse down by her side. "Say you forgive me, May—breathe but the word, and in a few days an ocean shall roll between us."

But he spoke to ears which heard not. The moment that May recognised Bolton, reason was restored, but animation fled, and she sank dead for a time in his arms. He was about to take measures for her restoration, when the rapid trampling of horses' hoofs drew his attention in another direction; and, looking over the hedgerow, he perceived two horsemen, at a very little distance, advancing towards the village. He seemed to be aware of their errand, and the cause of their speed; for no sooner had he cast his eyes on them, than his head instinctively slunk down behind the hedge. But his precaution was too late. He had been seen; and that night he was led, a fettered man, to the jail of H——, charged with highway robbery. We may as well conclude his history, as well as that of the

other individuals who have been interwoven with our tale, before returning to May Darling.

Mr Henry Bolton was found guilty of the crime with which he was charged, and condemned to perish on the scaffold, although it was only his first offence, and, to do him justice, he had committed the crime for the purpose of having it in his power, in some measure, to requite May Darling for the injury which she had received at his hands. How wonderful are the ways of Providence in punishing the guilty! Actuated by a motive unquestionably virtuous, Bolton commits a capital crime, and the woman whom he had wronged becomes, unconsciously to herself, the ultimate cause of his punishment! However, by powerful intercession on the part of his friends, the sentence was commuted to transportation for life. But it was destined that he should end his days miserably. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Bolton was virtually a murderer, as we shall see; and the curse could not be eluded by the decision of any earthly tribunal. 'Twas vain to attempt to fly from it. The vengeance of Heaven would have pursued him through all the regions of space; and, screened by the closest envelope of darkness and disguise, would have struck its victim down. In a skirmish with the natives of the place to which he had been transported, he was taken prisoner, and by them put to a cruel and lingering death.

After the painful interview with her husband in the church of Grassyvale, Mrs Bolton returned to her father, secluding herself from the world, and devoting her time to household duties and the education of her son. Rumours of the death of her husband penetrated at last to the remote part of the country where she resided, and, on its being officially authenticated, Dr G——, who had commenced practice in a neighbouring town, became a frequent visiter at the farmhouse. His former courtship was re-

newed; and, when the days of mourning were over, and time had done much to alleviate grief, to restore the faded charms of Mrs Bolton, and to throw the events of the past into dimness and distance, they were united; and are still, according to the last accounts, living happily together, surrounded by a family of thriving children. Nelly Gray and Janet Baird still pursue their respective callings in Grassyvale—the latter never failing, on every possible occasion, to boast of her sagacity in detecting the real character of Mr Henry Wilkinson, *alias* Bolton. But let us return to the suffering May Darling.

She was borne to her cottage home insensible, in which state she remained all that night, and next day revived, only to know that she was dying. Yes, the arrow that had pierced her was poisoned; but the venom, though fatal, worked slow. Gold is refined by fire, and the more intense the heat applied, the purer will the metal become. So is it with the human soul. It is made perfect through suffering; and the more it is destined to endure, the fitter will it become for taking a part with the choirs of saints and angels, when it shall have thrown aside the garment of mortality, and mounted on high, like the unshadowed moon, through parted clouds. But May was happy notwithstanding. In all her looks and movements were disclosed the peace of mind which passeth understanding. It was diffused, like light from heaven, over her countenance; it was heard, like a rich chord of music, in the tones of her voice; her every word and action betrayed its presence and all-prevailing power. Her Bible, although always a favourite study, became now her sole one; and by its all-hallowing influence, her mind, looking down with calm complacency on all terrestrial things, had an early foretaste of immortality, in many a delightful contemplation of that abode and that felicity which shall reward the just.

"It was a delightful evening, about the middle of au-

tumn," says the worthy clergyman to whom we have been indebted for many of the facts of the foregoing narrative, "that I was hastily summoned by John Darling to visit his daughter, who, he believed, was dying. I lost no time in proceeding to his cottage, and found that his conjecture was but too true. In an easy-chair, placed at an open window which faced the west, reclined the victim of a broken heart. On her pale cheek death had impressed his seal, though there the deceitful rose-tint fluctuated, which was not so in her days of health and hope. Her words, when she spake (and that was seldom), seemed to come forth without her breath; and the lightest down that ever was wafted through summer's air might have slept unfluttered on her lips. I kneeled down, and prayed that the gentle spirit, which was about to be released from its mortal bonds, might receive a welcome to the realms of life and light. She understood distinctly that she was dying; and, in token that her mind was at perfect ease, she faintly uttered, when I had finished, 'Yes! oh yes! Heaven! he——!' The words died unfinished on her tongue, and her spirit rose to its native sky.

'Peace to her broken heart and virgin grave!'

"In what a noble, what a truly grand point of view does this instance of triumphant faith place the glorious religion in which we believe! In what bold relief does its value to our fallen race appear! What a luminous light does it shed in life's last agonies, opening up a radiant vista through the clouds and darkness which settle on the soul, like the shadows of approaching death! There is nothing better qualified to develop the intellectual faculties, enlarge the understanding, and strengthen and foster the latent virtues of the heart, than the love and the study of literature. I am no advocate for the exclusive study of Scripture—nay, I am not sure if such restricted reading would not lead to narrowness of mind and gloomy unconcern about the affairs

of life, and the duties connected with it, if not also to selfish moroseness and illiberal bigotry—a want of community of feeling and sympathy with human nature in general. But what would literature *alone* have done for May Darling? Would the recollection of Shakspere's finest bursts of inspiration, where the dramatist seems struggling with nature which shall be the greatest, have buoyed her spirit up under the load which oppressed it, or given but one, only one, faint assurance of immortality? Alas! they could only have reminded her of what it would have been far better to forget for ever, to bury in everlasting oblivion beneath the waves of Lethe. How finely does the bard of Hope write, in reference to the anticipation of eternal felicity in the hour of dissolution!

> 'What though each spark of earth-born rapture fly?—
> The quivering lip, pale cheek, and closing eye?
> Bright to the soul thy seraph hands convey
> The morning dream of life's eternal day!'

Or what could philosophy have done for her? Science has only reference to this life—its eagle eye has never caught a ray reflected from that which is to come. Matter may be tortured by methods, varied with infinite ingenuity; but every secret thus disclosed only relates to *matter*—there is nothing of spirit brought to light in all the experiments of the chemist, in all the observations of the astronomer, in all the gropings and searching investigations of the geologist; for, though he reveals past time—ay, almost a past eternity—the strata of the earth, with their world of organic wonders, which record the transpired history of our planet in imperishable hieroglyphics, tell nothing of the future. The ocean, with its buried wrecks and its countless treasures; the mountain, over which the mighty deep once rolled its undulating expanse, and there deposited its myriads of living creatures; the desert, which heaps its ocean of sand over entombed cities, once the glory of the earth—— But why

should we go on?—everything speaks of the past, but not a whisper comes from creation's breast of what is to come. The Bible alone discloses the mighty secret. May all, therefore, find it what it proved to be to May Darling: light, when all is dark—hope, when all is despair—pleasure in pain—life in death."

It was upon her that a nameless rustic bard, who had been an admirer, composed the following lines:—

"She faded like a flower
That wastes by slow decay;
Not snatch'd in an untimely hour,
But wither'd day by day.
'Twas sad to see those charms,
So heavenly once, decay'd;
And oh! to blight thee in our arms,
In bridal robes array'd!

But Heaven commenced with thee
Whilst yet below the sun;
And, ere the mortal ceased to be,
The seraph had begun.
Calm, then, on Nature's breast,
In dreamless sleep, sleep on,
Till angel voices break thy rest
In music like thine own!"

I CANNA BE FASHED!

or,

WILLIE GRANT'S CONFESSIONS.

"HERE'S a bonny day, sir," said old Willie Grant, "and the Whitadder's in excellent trim—will ye get your gad and your creel, and we'll awa see what sort o' sport there is. If I'm no mistaen, the trouts will rise as fast as ye throw the line to-day."

"Oh, I canna be fashed," said the individual to whom he spoke.

"What's that I hear ye say?" added Willie, seriously. "Ye canna be fashed! can ye no? Do ye think ye could be fashed to read the 'Cottagers o' Glenburnie?' Ye would there see the meaning and the effects o' 'I canna be fashed' illustrated. But if ye can be fashed to hear, I'll gie ye an example in my ain case; and, I assure ye, that those four words, 'I—canna—be—fashed' (he spoke them very slowly, laying emphasis on each)—I say, sir, those four words hae cost me a thousand pounds twice told. I got them for nacthing; but, certes, they proved a dear bargain in the long run. They hae made me acquainted wi' a sair skin, a sair heart, and an empty pocket. I hae nae remembrance wha learned me the words, nor am I altogether certain but that they are words that just spring out o' the laziness and indolence o' our dispositions, like weeds out o' a neglected soil. But weel do I remember the first time when I was made to hae a feeling remembrance o' having used them. My faither was a bit sma' laird in East Lothian—no very far frae Dunglass—and the property consisted o'

between thirty and forty acres, so that he managed to bring up a family o' five o' us very comfortably, and rather respectably—and the more especially as my mother was a very thrifty woman. I was the third o' the family; and, as I was gaun to say to ye, there was ae day that we were a' gilravishing about the floor, and wheeling ane anither in a little wheelbarrow that my faither had got a cartwright in Dunbar to mak for us (for he was a man that liked to see his bairns happy), when, says he to me—

"Willie, tie yer whings,* and dinna let yer shoon be shaughlin aff yer feet in that gate, or ye maun gang barefoot. Folk shouldna hae shoon that dinna ken hoo to wear them."

"I canna be fashed, faither," said I, and continued running after the wheelbarrow; but, before ever I wist, and before I thought that I had done ill, he gied me a cuff i' the haffits that made me birl half donnert by the cheek o' the lum.†

"Ay, man!" says he, "what's that I hear ye say—'*ye canna be fashed!*' Let me hear the words come out o' your lips again if ye daur, and I'll knock the life out o' ye."

That was the first time that I particularly remember o' having made use o' the phrase, and I am only sorry that the clout which my faither gied me didna drive it out o' my head frae that day henceforth, and for ever; though, truly, it had nae such effect, as ye shall hear, and as I experienced to my sorrow. I sat down whinging till my faither gaed out o' the house, and, as soon as his back was turned, I dried my een, and began to drive about the barrow again wi' my brothers and sisters; but I hadna ran aboon ten minutes, till my mother, wha was tired wi' the noise we were making, cried—

"Willie, laddie, gie me aff your stockings instantly. Preserve us! the callant has holes in their heels ye micht put

* Shoe-ties. † Chimney.

yer nieve through!—There's what ye've dune wi' your running about without yer whings tied."

'Hoot, mother," cried I, "I canna be fashed—darn them again' nicht."

"I'll '*canna be fashed*' ye—ye lazy monkey, ye. Did your faither no gie ye aneugh for that no ten minutes syne, and ye'll tell me ony siccan a story!"

She grippit me by the neck, and for my faither's ae clout she gied me ten, at every cuff saying, I'll *canna be fashed* ye!" And at last she threw aff my shoon, and pulled the stockings aff my legs, and pushed me awa frae her wi' a great drive, crying, "Now, only let me hear ye making use o' thae words again, and ye'll maybe see what I can be fashed to do."

"Oh dear me!" thought I, "what ill have I done?" And I sat down, and I grat and I roared most heartily, and I kicked my bare feet upon the floor.

"Kick awa there, my man," said my mother—for she was a woman that never got into what ye could call a passion in her family, as I have seen some mothers do—"kick awa there," says she; "and if ye drive a hole in the heels o' the stockings you've on now, ye'll darn them yoursel."

But this, sir, was only the first thrashing that I got for "I canna be fashed"—it wasna the last, by a score o' times. My faither was a man that never liked to lay out a shilling where it could be saved; and he always grudged to employ other people to do anything when he thought it could be done within his own house—that is, by the members o' his own family—therefore, about the back end o' spring, or the fore end o' summer, he would have said to us—

"Now, bairns, haud awa to your beds, and before schooltime the morn, gang and howe the potatoes, or weed the corn."

I never durst say onything then, but slipped awa to be

very unwillingly—just feeling as if I felt it a trouble to put aff my claes. But before sunrise in the morning, when my brothers would have wakened me, I used to rub my een, and gaunt, and say—

"What!—what!—hoots!—I canna be fashed!"

And my faither, frae the ben-a-house, would have cried out, wi' a voice that made the very nails on my fingers shake, "What's that he's saying?—I'll *be fashed* him!"

Then up I would have got, shrugging my shoulders, and wriggling them frae side to side, and cried peevishly to one, "Where's my stockings?" and to another, "Where's my jacket?"

Then my faither would have cried out again, "*I'll seek* it for ye!" Then I soon found it, and got out o' the house wi' the rest o' them.

It was precisely the same thing when my brothers used to shake me in a morning, and say—

"Get up, Willie—ye haena your task yet."

I had invariably the same answer for them on such occasions also. I appeared as if naething could drive it out o' me. I have heard auld wives say, if ye were taking infants to ony part o' the globe ye like, and keeping them where they never would hear a human voice, nor speech o' one kind nor anither, that they would speak Hebrew! Now, I verily believe that, if ye had done the same by me—if ye had taken me, when a week auld, into the deserts o' Arawbia, wi' naething but dummies round about me, and not a living soul nor a living thing endowed wi' the power o' speech allowed to see me or come near me—I say, that I verily believe the first words I would have spoken would have been, "*I canna be fashed!*" in guid braid Scotch. The words literally seemed born wi' me. And, as I was telling ye about getting up to learn my tasks in the morning, many, many is the time, in the cauldest day o' winter, that my favourite phrase has caused the tawse to warm my hands, when the fingers o' a'

the rest o' the scholars were dinnlin wi' cauld, and they were holding them at their mouths, and blowing their hot breath on them to take out the frost. My faither should have paid no coal-money for me. And more than this, the four insignificant and carelessly-uttered words which I allude to, while I was at school, always kept me near the bottom o' the class; or, if I rose one or two towards the top, it was purely on account o' others having been awa from the school for a day, or half-a-day, and having to take the foot o' the class, on account o' their absence, as a matter o' course. Often and often I could have tripped their heels, and taken my place aboon them—and the teacher kenned it as weel, and many a weary time has he said to me, "Oh, ye stupid stirk! why do ye stand there? why didna ye trap him?"

And once, in particular, I remember I answered him, "I couldna be fashed, sir!"

"Fashed!" he cried, in a perfect fury, and he raised the tawse to his teeth—"fashed, sirrah!" he cried again; "then I'll learn ye to be fashed!"

But o' a' the belabourings I ever got frae either faither or mother, for the same cause, they were naething to the schoolmaster's. It's a miracle to me that there was a tail left on his tawse; for he loundered me round the school and round the school; and, aye as he loundered, he ground his teeth together, and he cried, "Heard ever onybody the like o' that! Canna be fashed, truly!—I'll fash ye, my man!—I'll learn ye to gie me an answer o' that kind again!"

But a' the thrashings that faither, and mother, and master could thrash at me, on every occasion the confounded words were aye uppermost—they were perpetually at my tongue end. I was just an easy, indolent being—one that seemed disposed to steal through the world wi' my hands in pocket, as smoothly as possible. When I grew to be a lad, I daresay those that kenned me best were surprised

that I could be fashed to gang a-courting, like other youngsters. But even then, when others would brush themselves up, and put on their half-best coat, and the like o' that, in order that they might look as smart as possible, I have thought to mysel, I wonder if I should shave and wash my face, and gie mysel a redd-up before I gang to see *her* the nicht; but perpetually I used to say to mysel—"Ou, I carena; I canna be fashed—I'll do very weel as I am." And there wasna less than three or four young lasses that I had a particular liking for—and each o' them, I daresay, would made an excellent wife, and I could been very happy wi' ony o' them—but they all broke off acquaintance wi' me, "just," as they said to their friends, "because I was o' such a slovenly disposition, that I couldna even be fashed to mak mysel purpose-like when I gaed to see a body."

The like o' this was very galling to me; but it hadna the effect o' making a better o' me. I couldna be fashed to be ony better, let come what might. "Losh-a-day," thought I, "I wonder what folk would hae me to be at, or how they can gie themsels sae meikle trouble, and be sae particular?"

But, beyond all others, there was one young woman that I had an affection for in a very extraordinary degree. She was as dear to me as the apple o' my ee; and I am sure she could hae done onything wi' me—save to break me o' my habit o' saying "I canna be fashed." That was beyond her power. It was my fixed intention to marry her; and, indeed, not only was the wedding-day set, but her wedding-gown and my coat were made, and the ring was bought, and she had spoken to her bridesmaid; and, besides buying a' sort o' things hersel, she had got her mother to have her providing packed up, and everything was in readiness just to be lifted to our new house—that is, the house we were to occupy. Now, when all this had taken place, there was one bonny starlight nicht that we were walking together,

just as happy as twa wood-pigeons, and talking owre the settlements o' every thing, that she said to me—

"What did the joiner say last nicht, Willie?—will he be sure no to disappoint us wi' the furniture?—for I would like everything richt at the very first."

"Eh! weel-minded, my dear," says I; "I really forgot to gang and see him, for I was sae tired when I got hame last nicht, that—I couldna be fashed."

"That was silly o' ye, man," said she; "it was very thoughtless. But I hope ye didna forget to gie in the marriage lines to the minister?" (The session-clerk was ill at the time.)

"Save us a', hinny!" said I, "weel, I am sure that dings everything! But, as sure as death! as I told ye, I was sae tired, that I never minded a word about it till bed-time, when I had my waistcoat unbuttoned and my shoon off, and I couldna be fashed to put them on again, and, at ony rate, it was owre late."

"Very weel, Willie," says she, and apparently a good deal hurt, "I wouldna thought it o' ye—but no matter."

"No, love," said I, "it's no great matter, sure enough; for this is only Saturday nicht, and I'll just call in at the manse in the by-going, as I gang hame, and tell the minister a' about it. The thing can be done in a minute."

"Indeed, no," said she, "though I should never be cried,* ye are to go no such way. This is Saturday nicht—the morn is the Sabbath, and the minister will be at his studies, and ye are not to disturb him upon my account."

"Very well, love," said I, "we'll just have to put off a week, then."

"Maybe sae," said she. But I thought there was something unco dry in her manner o' saying "maybe sae." However, as I couldna be fashed to call upon the minister that nicht, I took nae mair notice o' the subject.

* Cried—Publication of banns.

I could hardly get a word out o' her after this, for above an hour that I remained in her company. However, she rather came to a little (for she was a kind-hearted lassie), when we were about to part; and we promised faithfully to meet one another at the usual trysting-place, on the Wednesday nicht following, at eight o'clock, within a minute; and I was to have everything arranged wi' the minister and the joiner in the meantime.

On the Sunday morning, the minister passed me between the mause and the kirk, and, says he, quite familiarly—for he was a man that had nae stiffness about him—

"Willie, I thought you was to have been cried to-day."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said I; "but it was all my neglect; for I couldna be fashed until last nicht, and then I thought ye would be at your studies, and it was owre late to trouble ye."

"You were very considerate," said he, wi' a smile; "but I'll save you the trouble next week."

"I'll be obliged to ye, sir," said I, taking off my hat.

In going home, I overtook the joiner—no, I'm wrong, the joiner overtook me—and, after he had observed that it was a fine day, and I had said it was, and he had asked me what I thought o' the sermon, and so on, I said to him —"Now, I expect that ye'll no disappoint me wi' the furniture."

"Ye needna be feared o' that, Mr Grant," said he; "ye ken ye proposed that it was to be a ready-money transaction. It's no every day that we meet wi' jobs o' that kind, and ye may tak my word on't, I'll no disappoint ye—both for your sake and mine."

"Weel," thought I, "that's twa things aff my head—Isabella will surely be pleased now (for they ca'd her Isabella). I've been fortunate in meeting wi' them baith—in killing twa birds wi' ae stane."

But the appointed Wednesday nicht came, and perfectly

do I recollect, that a dark, dirty, gousty nicht it was. I had full three miles to go to see her, and about seven o'clock I pulled out my watch, and I went to the door. A sma' drizzling rain came battering on my face. I looked a' round about the heavens, and saw that there was nae appearance o' the night's clearing up, and, thinks I—"Weel, she'll ne'er think o' coming to meet me the nicht. She'll no be sae daft. It's o' nae use o' me gaun, and—I canna be fashed."

So I went into the house again, and sat down quite contented; and a nicht or twa after, the weather having settled, I went to see her at her faither's. The auld folk received me, as usual, very kindly; and the auld man got a seat for me next the fire, and inquired if there were any news—while his guidwife asked me if I wadna hae my stockings changed, as the roads were very wet, and my feet might be damp—and I thanked her, and said "No." But there sat *my intended*, plaiting at a cap-border, or frill, or something o' that sort, as stiff and as silent as a stucco image, never letting on that she either saw or heard me. I spoke to her twice or thrice, and she gied a sort o' low, half cough, half *hem!* but not a syllable did I get out o' her. Never did she look to the side o' the house I was on. Her head seemed to be fixed in a blacksmith's vice in an opposite direction, and dear kens what sort o' cap or frill it was she keepit plait, plait, plaiting at; but her task was never like to come to an end, and she keepit pingle, pingling, and nip, nipping at it wi' a knife, until my patience was fairly worn out. In my opinion her fingers had discovered the perpetual motion; and when I had sat until vexation and anxiety were like to choke me, I felt a sort o' ha! ha!—haing! in my throat, as though I could hae burst out into a fit o' passion, or greeting, or I dinna ken what—and wi' a great struggle I got up, and I managed to say—

'Will ye speak at the door, Isabella dear!"

"*I canna be fashed!*" said she.

O sir! sir! had ye experienced what I felt at that moment. The lounderings o' my faither, my mother, and my dominie, and the slights o' former sweethearts, were a mere naething to what her answer caused me to endure. I expected naething but that I would drop down upon the floor.

"Oh, ye foolish lassie, ye!" said her mother, who was sorry for me, "what do ye mean?"

"Get up!" said her faither.

"I canna be fashed!" said she again, more cuttingly than before, and half turned her een upon me, as she said it, in a manner that gaed through my breast as if ye had drawn a sharp knife across it.

Weel, sir, our names were ca'ed on the Sunday following; and between the first day o' their being published, and the day on which the marriage was to take place, I was three or four times back and forward at her faither's—but I got nae mair out o' her. I almost thought that I ought to stop the banns; but I thought, again, that that would be very unco like, and very contrary to what I wished; so I allowed them to go on, Sunday after Sunday.

I never imagined but that she was just in the pet at me having broken my tryst, and that, like everybody that was in the pet, she would come out o't when she found it necessary, and the sooner frae being left to hersel. But, on the very day we had fixed for the wedding, and when the best-man and I went to her faither's house, expecting to find her and the best-maid, and the whole o' them, in readiness to go before the minister—to my unutterable astonishment and dismay, there was she, sitting in her morning gown, as unconcerned as a judge, just as if naething had been to happen.

"Mercy me! Isabella!" says I, "are ye no ready?—where's the women?"

"Ready!" returned she—"what for?—what do ye mean?—what women?"

Oh! guid gracious! I'll never forget the sensation that I felt at that moment. I'm surprised that I didna drop dead on the floor. "Isabella," said I, "are ye no perfectly aware that this is our wedding-day, and that we were to be at the manse at twelve o'clock precisely?"

"Ay!" said she, "had ye keepit your tryst at such a time, and at such a place, nae doubt this would have been the day; but ye couldna be fashed to keep it then—and I canna be fashed now."

"Oh, confound it!" cried I; "Isabella, do ye want to drive me mad?"

"I dinna think there's ony danger o' that," replied she.

Vexation and surprise put me fairly beyont mysel—I was taken in a moment.

"Weel!" exclaimed I, "ye'll rue it, Isabella! ye'll rue it—there shall nae woman mak a fool o' me!"

"Nor man o' me," said she.

"Be it sae," said I; "yet, guidness me! you're no in earnest?"

"Earnest!" said she; "I tell you I canna be fashed."

At the sound o' the terrible words, I banged out o' the house. I never stopped till I came to Dunbar, and there, at the very moment I arrived, I took the coach for Edinburgh; and there I stopped but two days till I set off for London, for my heart was in such a terrible state o' perturbation, that I could have gone to the world's end, ay, and round it, and round it again, if I had had the means, in order that I might have found rest.

It seems that poor Isabella thought that I would come back—and the best-man persuaded her that I would—and she went to dress hersel, and sent for the best-maid. But little did she understand the character she had to deal wi'. I was either a' laziness, or a' desperation. I knew no medium; and I have no doubt that, before she got her hair dressed, and her gown fairly on, I was half-way to Edin-

burgh—for I flew to Dunbar as though furies had pursued me.

But, sir, the upshot was, that Isabella died a spinster, and I am a bachelor until this day, and will be, until the last day o' my existence; and thus did the four never-aneugh-to-be-detested words—"I canna be fashed"—place eternity, yea, an infinite chasm, between me and the only woman for whose sake I could have laid down my life, as cheaply as though it hadna been worth a sixpence.

Ye may think that the few instances I have related to ye, and their consequences, would have been aneugh to have cured me o' ever making use o' the words again—but ye shall see.

Now, you'll observe that, before the time I'm speaking o', my faither and mother were both dead, as well as two o' their family, so that there were but three o' us left, and we sold the property, and divided the money amongst us in equal shares. Therefore, when I got to London, I was not altogether bare-handed. Now, to my shame, I must confess that I had not been long there, till the remembrance o' Isabella, and the cause that had provoked me to come to desert her, were almost forgotten; for ye must remember that absence makes many changes—and there is many a bonny face in London. So, after I had looked about me for a week or two, I thought to mysel that I saw nobody doing better than the keepers o' wine and spirit vaults. It seemed a' ready-money; it was just nipper after nipper—that is, glass after glass, owre the counter—the money down, and done wi' it. I resolved to become a wine-vault keeper, and I looked around to see where such premises were to let. At length I pitched upon a shop that I thought would suit me exactly, on the north side of Clerkenwell Street, and nearly facing Jerusalem Passage.

There were a very great number o' compositors and pressmen, and bookbinders and gold-beaters, and other trades, in

the immediate neighbourhood; and I understood that they were in the habit o' making the vaults which I was about to take their pay-house and house-o'-call. So I took the house, and entered upon the business, and, in a very short time, I thought very little about Isabella, or the grief she had caused me. I hadna long opened the house until the compositors and the pressmen, the bookbinders, gold-beaters, and others, a' came back to it. They were weel-spoken, civil lads. They spent a deal o' money, and I certainly tried to be as civil and obliging to them as I could; and, in short, they called me "a fine chap," and "the best Scotsman out of all *sorts* they had ever met with."

Weel, in a week or two, some o' them began to get on to my slates—not by name, for I didna like to ask it; it was impudent; and, thought I, oh, it might spoil their custom at ony rate; and I canna be fashed; it would be an awfu trouble writing names upon a slate, especially the names o' so many. But I knew them a' by head-mark, and I thought there was no need for it.

However, one got into my books, and another got into my books; but, no, I am wrong there again, for they only got on to the slates—I couldna be fashed to carry them into the books; I thought there was nae need for it; they generally paid upon the Saturday nicht, and there was nae fear o' me forgettin.

But, in a short time, there never was a Saturday nicht but there was always some o' my debtor customers amissing; and when I inquired for any o' them, the reply was—

"Oh, you're one of his ghosts, are you? well, I wish you may get it—he's *got the bag*.*"

"So, so," I would say; "and he is off with his finger in my bag too."

Well, in this way I lost more money than I can tell. But I lost it in another way also, and from the same cause. You

* Got the bag—*i. e.*, paid off, or discharged.

know that in London every public-house has a porter-walk, or a beer-walk, as they call it, the same as the rounds of a milk-woman here, and they go round twice a-day, at dinner-time and supper-time. Well, to my surprise, in a few months I got the best beer-walk in all London. I couldna think how it was. I was almost rivalling the Alderney dairy which was at my very hand, for I had to engage two pot-boys to carry out my supply. But I gave credit; I trusted to the lads to keep an account of what they took out, and they trusted to me. I said "I couldna be fashed wi' tho like o' that;" but they said they gave me the names and number o' the individuals with whom they had intrusted both porter and pewter-pots; and if I did not mark it down and see after it, it was my look-out, and not theirs. In this way, I believe, I lost five butts o' porter within twelve months. Yet, sir, these were not the only griefs and the only losses that the four words which are the subject of my story have brought upon me. Not only did I frequently neglect to insert in my own books what I had sent out on credit, but I as frequently delayed to mark down what had been sent to me by the brewer or distiller, and said, "Hoot, I haena time—I canna be fashed to enter it to-day, I will do it the morn, or the next day." But the next day and the next came, and I could be less fashed than ever, and the entry remained untouched. Many a heavy loss I am sensible this has caused me; and often has it made me appear as a rogue, when my intentions were honest.

Sir, what I have told ye is but a sample o' what "*I canna be fashed*" has cost me. I could relate to you a thousand o' its consequences; but half-a-dozen are as good, and perhaps better than a thousand, by way o' example.

I had been about fifteen years in business, when I became bond, for a friend that I thought I could have trusted as my own brother, to the extent o' three thousand pounds. I was certain he was perfectly solvent, and from the acquaintance

I had had o' him, I could nae mair hae doubted him than I could hae doubted that I was the son o' my mother. But a few weeks after I had signed the bond, a mutual acquaintance called upon me, and, says he—

"Grant, you have acted like a fool."

"I dinna doubt," says I, for I was perfectly aware that I often had; "but what do ye mean to be at?"

"Why," says he, "So-and-so has taken you in. He is preparing to be off, bag and baggage, for America, and you will be left to pay the piper."

"Oh, ye are a suspicious wretch," says I; "man, I couldna believe the like o' that if ye were to swear it to me."

"Believe it or not," says he, "if you don't see after it instantly, your three thousand pounds are gone."

"Hoot! babbles!" said I, "the man's daft!—do ye think I dinna ken him better than that? The man is as sure as the bank. I would be the last man he would injure a farthing—I ken that weel aneugh. But, at ony rate, I am particularly busy, and I canna be fashed wi' ony nonsense o' the kind; so ye may keep yoursel easy, and I am only sorry that ye should hae such an opinion o' ony friend o' mine."

"Canna be fashed!" cried my acquaintance, hurrying from the shop; "what a deuced fool! Grant, you'll repent it."

I laughed at the man; for I had perfect confidence in my friend, and I knew that he had property worth three times the money that I was bond for him.

On the very next day, the same acquaintance came into my house very hastily, and says he—

"Grant, if you don't look after your money, and that very sharply, you will find your friend's property is no go, and you are in for paying the three thousand."

"Ye dinna mean to say the like o' that?" said I.

"Say that, you blockhead!" returned my acquaintance—"wherefore wouldn't you believe me yesterday?" And

placing his arm through mine, he dragged me out o' the house. We reached the habitation o' the worthy gentleman for whom I was surety in the sum o' three thousand precious pounds sterling. But he was off—off like a bird whose nest has been robbed o' its eggs. Twelve hours before, he had sailed for America, or some other quarter o' the globe; but where I never knew.

"Come home, Grant," said my friend, "don't distress yourself now."

"Oh, dinna speak to me," says I—"I canna be fashed; my three thousand pounds!—my poor three thousand pounds!"

We went into a tavern, and I drank out o' pure desperation until I could hardly stand; and as we were going home I fell, and I dislocated my arm, or I broke it; at ony rate I did something to it, and it never was like to get better; and my friends advised me to send for a surgeon—but ——

"What to do wi' a surgeon?" says I; "I canna be fashed wi' them. The arm will get better itsel."

But from that day until the present hour, I have never had the right use o' it. It made me useless, in a great measure, in the way o' business. Therefore I sold the goodwill o' my house, and wi' the other little remains o' what I had saved, I came down here, just to live as easy and as cheap as possible. And now, sir, as ye have seen what a *great gainer* I have been by the words "*I canna be fashed*," I hope and implore ye will never use them again, but take a warning by the example o' Willie Grant.

TALES OF THE EAST NEUK OF FIFE.

THE CASTLE OF CRAIL; OR, KING DAVID AND MAUDE.

"Ev'n kings hae taen a queen out o' the plain,
And what has been before may be again."—ALLAN RAMSAY.

THE reign of the illustrious Malcolm III., surnamed Canmore, King of Scotland, which began in the year 1057, was not more distinguished for heroism and literature than for love. He was both a religious and a valiant king, and was often victorious against the Danes, who frequently invaded Scotland. In his time, William, Duke of Normandy, conquered England, and in the great battle of Hastings, which took place in 1066, killed King Harold. Edgar, the lawful heir to the English crown, seeing the country conquered, and the nobles routed and dispersed, took shipping with his mother and sisters, and arrived in the Frith of Forth, and landed at Queensferry, which received its name from Margaret, the eldest sister of Edgar, whom King Malcolm afterwards married. King Malcolm was killed at the siege of Alnwick by Robert Moubray, who, unarmed, upon a light horse, came out of Alnwick Castle, with a lance in his hand, and bearing the keys of the castle upon its point.

King Malcolm, while earnestly regarding the keys, was stabbed by Moubray through the left eye to the brain, and died instantly. King William the Conqueror, in consequence of this achievement, changed the name of Moubray to that of Percy, of whom are descended the Dukes of Northumberland.

After sundry usurpations, Edgar and Alexander, the first and second sons of King Malcolm, severally reigned for a number of years, and died childless; and in 1124, David I.,

the hero of our tale, ascended the throne. He possessed a large share of his father's virtues, and during his reign cultivated those arts and sciences which Malcolm had encouraged. His heart was particularly susceptible of the tender passion, and of the power of beauty. It is a well-established historical fact, that King David occasionally resided at the Castle of Crail, which stood on a rock overhanging the harbour, and vestiges of this royal residence still remain. A summer-house now stands on the site, surrounded by a large garden; and the place is sometimes occupied by the owner, a landed gentleman in the neighbourhood, and his friends, for the purposes of good fellowship and social intercourse.

While residing at the Castle of Crail, the king and his younger nobles resolved on partaking of the wild sports of the neighbourhood; and with this view they proceeded one day, well mounted, and attended by the hounds, to Kingsbarns, a fine tract of land belonging to the crown, where the grain was stored in barns for payment of the king's rents; and from thence they passed on to an extensive and thickly-wooded district—in fact, a large forest, which now constitutes a considerable portion of the Parish of St Andrews and surrounding parishes. The ancient name of this district was *Cursus Apri*, or, the Boar-Chase, and hence is derived the present name of the village contiguous, "Boarhills."

Having started a wild boar out of this forest, it took a westerly course towards Kingsmuir (which, as its name implies, also belonged to the crown), and the party set off in hot pursuit. This muir, now highly cultivated, was, at the time to which we refer, a waste or common of little value, and on which many of the neighbouring proprietors, in consequence, claimed a servitude right of pasturage; but it was under an officer of the crown, styled "Heritable Keeper of the Kingsmuir." Here, then, while engaged in the exciting sport of the chase of the boar (which, in the end, was killed

at Kingscairn Mill), a deer, a fox, and a wild cat also broke cover, and the attention of the hunters and hounds being thus divided, the party separated, and the king found himself alone upon the muir.

David was in the prime of life—a very handsome man, and of princely bearing, and, while thus unattended and unknown, he met with a lovely young shepherdess in a lonely part of the muir, tending her father's sheep. The name of the young woman, he found, was Maude, or Matilda, and, having inquired of her where she abode, he departed, resolving to cultivate the acquaintance he had thus accidentally formed. He frequently visited the shepherdess after this (who was entirely ignorant of his rank), in the capacity of a private gentleman, and her conversation was his delight. There was something mysterious to him in her deportment and her accomplishments: she possessed the strictest innocence and the most dignified bearing without the slightest embarrassment. Though plainly attired, "grace was in all her steps," and every action exhibited courtly propriety and ease. Though her observations were chiefly confined to her flocks, and to rural affairs, yet she would occasionally surprise the king with her remarks upon astronomy, history, geography, morals, and agriculture, which bespoke a mind informed far above the common level. Being thus engaging in her mind and manners, it was not to be wondered at that every additional visit increased the love and affection of the astonished king, whose dignity was her torture. His passion grew stronger every day.

The king was captivated with her charms. Honour, however, governed his actions, and subjected his wishes to the control of virtue: he wished to raise her to an exalted situation, not to triumph over her innocence—in short, he wished to make her his royal bride; but this seemed impossible, and he returned dejected to his Castle of Crail. He

regretted that high rank should now stand in the way of his happiness, and almost wished he had not been born a king. He consulted the Lord of Douglas, his prime minister, urged the beauty, the virtue, the genius of Matilda, but all in vain; the reply was, that policy and prudence required him to seek a union with some exalted character—an alliance with the daughter of a powerful and wealthy prince; and that, were he to place a shepherdess on the throne, his nobles would be disgusted, and quit his court, and in all probability proceed by open violence to resent the supposed insult to their dignity. The king admitted that what was said was too likely to be the fact, and at the same time reprobated that pride which deemed an alliance with obscure and untitled virtue disgraceful; but he knew the prejudices of his nobility were unconquerable, and he submitted with great reluctance to his fate. His friends—and amongst others the Lairds of Cambo, Anstruther, Grangemuir, and Balcombie, the Provost of Crail, and Prior of St Rufus, the remains of whose chapel may still be seen a little eastward of Crail, near Roome Bay, and whose well (called the Prior's Well) is yet resorted to occasionally by the good people of the Nethergate—these friends, we say, tried in vain to divert the king's thoughts, and alleviate his distress. They informed him of the great antiquity of the burgh—that it was a place of note in the ninth century. They conveyed him on horseback to the Dane's Dyke, the remains of a bulwark of stones thrown up by our Danish invaders in one night, where human bones, in great quantities, are yet cast up by the plough on the farm of Kilmining; and they then passed on to the Cave of Balcombie Sands, where they told him one of his majesty's predecessors, Constantine, the Scottish king, was beheaded by the Danes, in the year 871, he having been taken prisoner in a skirmish, while the enemy were retreating. The party then visited the Castle of Balcombie, a lofty and extensive pile of building, of immense strength

and remote antiquity, where, in after years, Mary of Guise was hospitably entertained, on landing, after a tempestuous passage, at Fifeness-haven, in order to be married to King James V. From hence King David proceeded to Airdrie, or Ard-rhi—a name which in the Celtic language denotes "the king's height"—then a favourite royal hunting-station on the borders of Kingsmuir; and, returning to Crail, the Runic Cross was not forgotten.*

It were endless to tell of all the devices resorted to by his friends to alleviate the king's melancholy. The greatest beauties of the castle courted his smiles without effect. Their charms seemed but to remind him of the superior fascinations of his beloved Matilda. Nothing seemed to remain to him but the trying task of parting, perhaps for ever, from his captivating shepherdess.

The king often thought of asking Matilda for the story of her life, but dreaded that the narrative would but confirm his misery. Upon one of his visits, he missed her at the accustomed spot, but found a venerable old man attending the sheep in her place. The king anxiously inquired for Matilda, and was informed that she was visiting a family in the neighbourhood.

The family which she had gone to visit lived in an unpretending mansion beautifully situated on a ridge of rising ground, which stretches from east to west, nearly through the middle of what is now the Parish of Carnbee. This

* This is a singular monument, and of great antiquity. At the repair of the church of Crail, it was laid down in place of a piece of Arbroath pavement, to form one of the passages, and is thereby already somewhat mutilated, and had it been allowed to continue much longer in that situation, it must have been entirely obliterated; but it is gratifying to state that, while these lines are going to press, a gentleman from the Cape of Good Hope, on a visit to Crail, his native parish, has had the good taste to get the stone removed, and placed in the wall of the church, where it will be now preserved from further dilapidation.

ridge rises in different places into hills of a beautiful conical form, and are green and verdant to the summit; these are Carnbee-law, Kellie-law, Gillingshill, and Cunner-law. It was to Gillingshill Matilda had directed her steps, and, occupying as it did an elevated position, the house commanded an extensive and splendid view.*

The maiden had acquainted her father that she often had a visiter when keeping her flocks in the muir, and, from her description of him, the old man conceived the individual present to be that person, and accordingly invited him to their habitation, which invitation David, throwing aside for awhile his usual courtly ceremony, accepted.

He went on with sorrowing steps, and yet would not have staid behind. The small and unpretending cottage before him damped him at first, but when he thought upon it as the home of his fair enchantress, his spirits were again cheered. He found in the place neatness and rural elegance. He would have been happy to have changed his sceptre for a shepherd's crook, and his noble Castle of Crail for this humble dwelling. He was invited to refresh himself, and Matilda soon joined them; but, although the table was spread with healthful rustic dainties, he could not do justice to the feast. Matilda's charming company and conversation was his regalement. The old man apologised for the homeliness of his fare, supposing *that* to be the cause of his

* Among the objects which the eye now takes in by a short sweep are the noble mansion of Kellie Castle, belonging to the Right Honourable the Earl of Mar and Kellie; Grangemuir, the residence of the Right Honourable Lord William Douglas; Balcaskie, the seat of Sir Ralph Abercrombie Anstruther, Baronet; together with Elie House and village, with its commodious harbour; Kilconquhar House, with its beautiful loch; Balcarras, with its picturesque craig, its ivy-mantled chapel, and its many military, historical, and literary associations; Pitcorthie, with its magnificent mansion; Gibleston, with its fine woods and gardens, and many villas of lesser note.

guest's abstinence, and said, "That once he could have entertained him better, but now he had little more to offer than a hearty welcome."

A knock was heard at the door, and a young farmer having entered who wished to buy some sheep, the old man retired with him with the view of making a bargain.

The young couple being left alone, David moved his chair nearer to that of Matilda, and began to renew his attentions to her; but, however much she was pleased with the courtly air and intellectual conversation of her visiter, she was resolved to act with prudence and circumspection. She therefore took this opportunity of stating to him, in a polite and kindly manner, that, as he had said his visits were paid for the purpose of making *her* acquaintance, and that while she thanked him for the favourable opinion he had often expressed with regard to her, yet, as he was a stranger, and had never been regularly introduced, she should be obliged to decline his future visits. She further stated, that he must be well aware there can be no safe principle except this, that every man aiming at our acquaintance must be introduced to us by some person we already know, who becomes a guarantee, as it were, for the propriety of his behaviour and the honour of his views; that without this we can never be sure that the individual addressing us is not a designing adventurer, who would think nothing of making our happiness his sport; and that for a young female to admit the addresses of an unknown young man, however fascinating his manners or noble his air, would be to run a great risk of disappointment and unhappiness for life.

The old man now came into the room, and the subject of conversation being changed, King David shortly afterwards took leave of his entertainers, bowing respectfully as he retired.

Matilda's father had been her tutor, and he was well qualified for that office. To aid the development of her in-

fant mind—to pour forth to her, as she grew in years and in reason, all the fruits of his own richly-cultivated intellect, was the solitary consolation of one over whose head was impending the misfortune of incompetence, or deficiency of means for the adequate support of himself and his daughter. Matilda was gifted with a mind which, even if her tutor had not been her father, would have rendered tuition a delight. Her lively imagination, which early unfolded itself; her dangerous but interesting vivacity; the keen delight, the swift enthusiasm with which she drank in knowledge, and then panted for more; her shrewd acuteness, and her innate passion for what was excellent and beautiful, filled her father with rapture, which he repressed, and made him feel conscious how much there was to check, to guide, and to form, as well as to cherish, to admire, and to applaud.

As she grew up, the bright parts of her character shone with increased lustre; but, in spite of the exertions of her instructor, some less admirable qualities had not yet disappeared. She was still too often the dupe of her imagination; and though perfectly inexperienced, her confidence in her theoretical knowledge of human nature was unbounded. She had an idea that she could penetrate the character of individuals at first meeting; and the consequence of this fatal axiom was, that she was always the slave of first impressions, and constantly the victim of prejudice; she was ever thinking individuals better or worse than they really were, and she believed it to be out of the power of any one to deceive her. Constant attendance during many years on a dying beloved mother, and her deep religious feelings, had first broken, and then controlled, a spirit which nature had intended to be arrogant and haughty. Her father she adored; and she seemed to devote to him all that consideration which, with more common characters, is generally distributed among their acquaintances.

We hint at her faults. How shall we describe her virtues?

Her unbounded generosity, her dignified simplicity, her graceful frankness, her nobility of thought and feeling, her firmness, her courage, and her truth, her kindness to her inferiors, her constant charity, her devotion to her parents, her sympathy with sorrow, her detestation of oppression, her pure unsullied thoughts, her delicate taste, her deep religion—all these combined would have formed a delightful character, even if unaccompanied with such brilliant talents and such brilliant beauty as she possessed. Nature and art were the graces which had combined to form this girl. She was a jewel set in gold, and worthy of a king.

After the remarks made by Matilda on his last visit, the king resolved to make known to the old man and his daughter his rank and station with as little delay as possible; but, being wishful at the same time to ascertain previously what were the feelings of Matilda towards him as a private individual, irrespective of his kingly crown and dignity, he thought it best to postpone the communication until he should have learned the history of the old shepherd and his family. For this purpose he repaired on an early day to Kingsmuir, and bearing in mind the few words which formerly fell from the old man in reference to his having seen better days—words which had greatly raised the hopes of the king, and fixed his attention on the story of their fortunes—he entreated the sage to relate the same, which he agreed to do, and began as follows:—"I was formerly Earl of Northumberland, and husband of Juditha, grand-daughter of William the Conqueror. Our family were nearly connected with royalty, and my possessions in lands, flocks, and herds, exceedingly extensive and valuable. I lived in becoming splendour. I was beloved by my neighbours, and happy in my family. My estates are situated not far from the borders of Scotland, and were frequently invaded by the Scottish chiefs. For a long time my tenants and servants bravely repelled these attacks, but at length increas-

ing in their numbers, we were overpowered. They spoiled and ravaged all our lands, and drove away our flocks and herds, save a small portion, with which I removed to the East of Fife, to find security and protection. Here have I since lived—suppressed my style and title, and passed myself off as a poor old shepherd, with this my humble but virtuous and affectionate daughter, the comfort and support of my declining years."

The king struggled to conceal the thrilling emotions which he felt at this narration, and asked the old man whether he had applied at court for succour in his distress. His question was answered thus:—"No; my family, consisting of but myself and young Matilda, and my desires being confined to narrow bounds, by the dictates of religion and philosophy, I thought it unjust to ask of this country that support which health and honest industry could procure, and thereby deprive more useful subjects of their just reward." The king admired the generous spirit of the venerable sage; told him he had interest at court; assured him that the king would be glad to see him, and insisted that he and his daughter should hasten thither; which journey, after considerable hesitation, they resolved to undertake.

It is impossible to describe the transports of the young king on this occasion. He came back to the castle, to inform his courtiers that two interesting strangers were shortly to visit them, and he made all due preparations for his expected and welcome guests. The scene was now changed from deep despondency to the most complete joy and felicity.

At the appointed time the old shepherd and his lovely daughter arrived at the good old town and Castle of Crail; and having recovered from their surprise, the king introduced them to the court in their rural habits, without disclosing their rank. As companions of the king, the courtiers were obliged to receive them with civility, but their affected politeness could ill conceal their absolute contempt. The

court broke up, and the king again engaged in conversation with the Earl of Northumberland. He requested to know where his daughter derived so much knowledge? To which the earl replied, "From my own poor stock. She was my sole companion. I thought it my interest as well as my duty to teach her every science I knew. She had an apt and comprehensive intellect, and easily received instruction."

In a few days the king again assembled all his courtiers. He had previously advised with the prime minister and privy councillors on the propriety of a marriage with an earl's daughter of royal lineage, and obtained their unqualified consent and approval. He then introduced the old man as the Earl of Northumberland, and the beautiful shepherdess as his daughter Matilda. Shame seized the ungenerous nobility for their former conduct, but the offended parties soon removed their embarrassment; and a noble suite of apartments were soon set aside for the earl and Matilda in the house of the governor of the castle.*

* The Castle of Crail was an important station in early times. The fortress was entered by a massive gate in the Shoregate, the site of which is now occupied by a house some time belonging to the late Mr William Cowan. Within the rampart which defended the entrance were placed the guard-house and apartments for officers. For centuries the castle consisted of little more than these houses and a single tower, surrounded by a barbican, and other defences; but after the end of the eleventh century it became of more importance as a royal residence for King David. In his reign the fortifications were considerably extended; a governor's house was erected, with two circular towers, from which a grand view was obtained to seaward, and of the surrounding country. Within a second gate were two courts, containing the king's palace, the parliament hall, the chapel, and other buildings. The roof of the king's room in the palace was completely covered with rich carving in oak, long regarded by the town's-people with veneration. There was also a house for storing grain, and a well of excellent water within its walls. This fortress was considered the key of the East of Fife, and, before the invention of gunpowder, was deemed impregnable.

In a fine summer afternoon David and his beloved Matilda were seated alone in a room of the governor's house.

Now, as interviews between lovers are usually very delightful to our fair young friends in general, we might for their benefit narrate at great length all that was said and done by the parties above mentioned; but, without disappointing them altogether, we shall be very brief on the subject, and rather hasten to unfold more important parts of their adventures.

"Sweet Matilda," began David, "my heart, that never knew another love, is all your own. Since we first met on Kingsmuir, your image has not quitted my mind for a second. Not for a moment have I ceased to think you the best, the most beautiful, the most enchanting, the most endearing creature that ever graced our country."

She turned; her eye glistened; her arm fell over his shoulder; she buried her head in his breast. At this very moment the door opened, and the earl her father entered; and David exclaimed, "Oh, my dear earl, I am the happiest man that ever breathed."

"What is all this?" inquired the earl.

"Is it possible," said the king, "that you have not long before detected the feelings I ventured to entertain for your daughter? In a word, she requires only your sanction to my being the most fortunate of men."

"My gracious sovereign," cried the earl, "it is out of the power of man to impart to me any event which could afford to me such exquisite pleasure."

The earl then approached his daughter, and, bending down, pressed the lips of his child. It was the seal to their plighted faith, and told without speech that the blessing of a father mingled with the vows of a lover. At this moment Matilda thought only of her father—that friend of her life in prosperity and adversity, whose love had never been wanting—

was she now about to leave him? She rose; she threw her arms about her father's neck, and wept.

The earl at this time considerately remembered that he wanted to see his servant, and they were left alone. Their eyes meet; their soft looks tell that they are thinking of each other. His arm steals round the back of her chair, and with the other hand he gently lays hold on hers. But why more? First love—first love, how many a glowing bard has sung thy charms! Nature herself seemed to those loving hearts more beautiful than ever. Their own thoughts reflected themselves in every object that met their view, as they wandered amidst the shady woods or along the sunny braes near the royal residence.

But although the young king was in love, duty was not to be neglected; and the old earl entreated that the youthful pair should cease to wander on the West Braes, and Roome Links, and woods, and muirs which at that time surrounded the burgh. He urged the king to examine and make good the walls of the town, and the gates at the East and West Ports, and Jockey's Port, as well as those of the Nethergate and Shoregate; also the castle walls, gates, and defences, and whole fortifications. The armoury came likewise under observation, and an inspection took place of the bowmen, while practising archery in the Bow Butts. These precautions became necessary, as rumours began to be circulated that a war might speedily be expected with the English.

The affairs of state having also received due attention, the court resolved to visit the Isle of May.

The morning was remarkably fine, when the king, with the Earl of Northumberland, Matilda, and a number of his court, embarked at Crail in a pleasure-yacht for the May. The air was pure, the sea slightly ruffled with a favouring breeze, and the sky almost cloudless; all nature looked bright and beautiful, and the morning sun cast the

shadows of the vessel's masts across the water in the harbour.

The harbour of Crail presented a very animated scene. Everything was in unison with the sunny day and the illustrious occasion. The piers were lined with soldiers, and behind them were dense crowds of spectators. The royal Scottish standard was flying from the castle, and from the south pier-head. The harbour was crowded with boats and small craft, to witness the departure. On the yacht leaving the harbour, the cheer was taken up by the soldiers and the populace, while the band struck up the national air.

The Island of May was reached in less than an hour. In sailing round the western side, the most discordant sounds saluted the ear from kittiewakes, seagulls, scouts, and other wild sea-fowl, which inhabit the rock in myriads, and nestle in the bare crevices; and some of the party, wishful to display their skill in archery, brought down a few of the birds with their arrows, both sitting and on the wing. A landing was safely made on the southern side, and the company separated into small parties, to stroll over the island, and view its natural curiosities and various remains of antiquity, particularly its priory and gifted holy well.

After spending a delightful day, the court embarked with the afternoon's tide for Crail, and, when at a distance from the island, they viewed with interest the romantic Castle of Dreel, the stronghold of the Anstruthers of Anstruther, to whom the king had lately granted a charter, wherein the heir is designed "Filius Willielmi de Candela, domini de Anstruther:" "son of William de Candela, Lord of Anstruther," a name obviously of Norman origin. This castle lies at the bottom of the bay, between the Billowness and Craignoon Rock, with its rough, grey, antique houses clustering round the mouth of the Dreel burn. Brightly on sea and on shore shone the unclouded afternoon's sun on the white cliffs of the isle, and the rugged shore of the East of Fife, with all

its caverns, rocks, and towers, its ancient burghs, with their pointed spires, and long and straggling fishing villages, that dot the rocky beach. The scene was lovely and beautiful. The Forth shone like a stream of lucid gold; West Anstruther, with its old church of Norman architecture; Royal Crail, with its lofty castle, its chapel, and turreted battlements; Castle Cunningham, at the West Braes, and its gloomy caverns not far distant—all these were visible at once, and bathed in ruddy light.

King David having now declared his intention of espousing Matilda, the marriage was soon after solemnised within the chapel of the castle, with much splendour and dignity. The guests of the bridal were the nobility and dignified clergy, and in their suite a numerous assembly of vassals. A thousand knights, in their robes of silk, attended the bride on the morn of her nuptials, and several days were spent in hunting, feasting, dancing, and other circumstances of pomp and revelry.

A tournament, the frequent amusement of this warlike age, also took place. This was a martial sport or exercise which the ancient cavaliers used to perform to show their address and bravery. On this occasion, Walter Bisset, a powerful baron, who piqued himself on his skill in his weapons, was foiled by Patrick, Earl of Athole. An old feud which existed between these families embittered the defeat, and Athole was found murdered in his house, which, probably for the purpose of concealment, was set on fire by the assassins. The suspicion of this slaughter—which, even in an age familiar with ferocity, seems to have excited unwonted horror—immediately fell upon the Bissets; and although *Walter* was the person concerned in the tournament, the popular clamour pointed to *William*, the elder brother, and chief of the family. He was pursued by the nobility, who were incited to vengeance by the Earl of March and David de Hastings, and would have been torn to pieces, had

not the interference of the king protected him from the fury of the friends of Athole. Ultimately the Bissets were condemned, their estates forfeited to the crown, and they were ordered to repair to Palestine, and there, for the remaining days of their lives, to pray for the soul of the murdered earl.

When we muse on the chivalric and martial sports which distinguished our ancient burgh in former days, and witness the silence and gloomy depopulation which now reign in our streets; when we compare its lofty and formidable castle with its present bare and defenceless walls; when we think of the great maritime and commercial interest carried on, before the Union, between its harbour and Holland, and other foreign countries, and see its present limited coasting trade, we can scarcely help regretting the loss of its ancient grandeur. One cannot help *feeling* that of this royal residence, where princes feasted and heroes fought—now in the bloody earnest of storm and siege, and now in the games of chivalry, where beauty dealt the prize which valour had won—all is now desolate, all its glory is departed. The massy ruins of its castle walls only serve to show what their extent and splendour once was, and to impress on the mind of the musing visiter the transitory nature and value of all human possessions, and the true happiness of *those* who enjoy a humble lot in virtuous contentment.

Some of our readers may deem the marriage of David and Matilda a singular and improbable circumstance; but we can tell of a far more romantic bridal, and one well attested by historical evidence, which happened little more than a hundred years afterwards—viz., in 1272—with which important consequences were connected:—A Scottish knight of high birth, Robert de Bruce, younger of Annandale and Cleveland, was passing on horseback through the domains of Turnberry, which belonged to Marjory, Countess of Carrick. The lady happened at

the moment to be pursuing the diversion of the chase, surrounded by her squires and damsels. They encountered the Bruce. The young countess was struck by his noble figure, and courteously entreated him to remain and take the recreation of hunting. Bruce, who, in those feudal days, knew the danger of paying too much attention to a ward of the king, declined the invitation, when he found himself suddenly surrounded by the attendants; and the lady, riding up, seized his bridle, and led off the knight with gentle violence to her Castle of Turnberry. Here, after fifteen days' residence, the adventure concluded as might have been anticipated: Bruce married the countess, without the knowledge of her relations, or obtaining the king's consent; upon which King Alexander seized her Castle of Turnberry. The intercession of friends, however, and a heavy fine, conciliated the mind of the monarch. Bruce became, in right of his wife, Lord of Carrick, and the son of this marriage of romantic love was the great Robert Bruce, the restorer of Scottish liberty.

Soon after the royal marriage, preparations were made for the queen's coronation (King David having been crowned when he ascended the throne), and the royal pair, with the court, proceeded to Scone Palace for that purpose.

It was a fine morning in the month of July when the party set out, and the dawn was beautiful. Before them lay the great Frith of Forth, rolling down in the bright sunshine from the mountains of the west, its shores teeming with fertility and natural loveliness. Along the banks the mists were rising from the verdant cones and waving woods of Innergellie, Lochton, and Balcomie. It was a spacious prospect of flowering meadow and ripening corn-field—of foliaged coppice and flowing ocean—of rising eminence and busy burgh town—of ships and fishing-boats at anchor or under sail, with the glorious sunshine beaming over all, and everything was full of life, of light, and of happiness arour

them. The road from Crail passed through Airdrie Woods, by the back of Kellie-law, and thence through the muirs to Falkland.* Here the royal party stopped and partook of refreshments, and thereafter proceeded on their journey to the Palace of Scone.

The mode in which the ceremony of Queen Matilda's coronation was performed is strikingly illustrative of the manners of the age. The Bishops of St Andrews and Dunkeld, with the Abbot of Scone, attended to officiate. The Bishop of St Andrews explained to her majesty the respective oaths, which were to be taken first in Latin, and afterwards in Norman French. They then conducted her to the regal chair or sacred stone of Scone, which stood before the cross in the eastern division of the chapel. Upon this she sat; the crown was placed on her head; she was invested with the royal mantle, and the nobility kneeling in homage threw their robes beneath her feet. A Highland bard or sennachy, clothed in a scarlet mantle, with hair venerably white, then advanced from the crowd, and bending before the throne, repeated in his native tongue the genealogy of the youthful queen.

Many years pass. Maude is dead; and our fancy, under a spell, leads us to Crail Church. The usual service has not yet commenced, and consequently neither the king, his family, nor attendants, have entered the church; but it is whispered that they may be looked for every moment, as his majesty was scrupulously punctual at prayers.

There was soon a large congregation assembled, certainly not less than a thousand persons, drawn hither by loyalty and curiosity, and in compliment to the royal birth-day. A soft and solemn strain of music now rose from the organ,

* It is still open, and of great breadth in various parts of the line, and retains the name of the King's Cadgers' Road, because the fish carriers from Crail travelled along it with fish from that royal burgh to supply the king's table when resident at Falkland Palace.

and time is given, during the voluntary, to collect the distracted thoughts, and to compose them into calmness and order suitable to the occasion. There now ran a muffled whisper of "The King! the King!" and a vista being opened in front, his majesty is seen quite distinctly. He is a venerable old man, hoary and furrowed—no grandeur, no majesty, no assumption of princely dignity. Shading his dim eyes with one hand, he reverently knelt down, and inwardly breathed his composing aspiration to the Throne of Grace. The other hand rested on the shoulder of the fairhaired child who stood by his side, his little granddaughter, whom he had led in his hand to the place of worship.

All this had passed in a few seconds: and there was now a deep hush, for the priests were in their places. The staring and whispering were suspended; the service commenced, and the aged monarch, bareheaded, his thin, trembling hands fervently clasped, his eyes uplifted as it were to the place to which all his earnest thoughts were now directed, in the attitude of intense, absorbing devotion—presented a picture of devotion of a character so solemn and impressive, that anything more striking could rarely be witnessed or imagined.

Here, then, is an end to all our previous dreams of royal splendour, for there stands the pious monarch, David, King of Scotland,

"His staff his sceptre, his grey hairs his crown,"

trembling in presence of his God, breathing the general confession of his sins with the beings of the same kindred and frail nature as himself that stood around him.

THE LEGEND OF THE CHURCH OF ABERCROMBIE.

From authentic documents referred to by Sir John Connel in his "History of Tithes," Abercrombie, or Abercrom-

lin, appears to have been a parish as far back as 1174. How long that character pertained to this portion of Fife we cannot say, but the church is obviously of very great antiquity. Having become so ruinous as to be unfit for a place of worship, it was abandoned in 1646, and since that time the parishes of Abercrombie and St Monans have been united, and the old church of St Monans, situated on the sea-shore, has served for the use of both.

In a romantic and beautiful situation within the grounds now forming part of the domain of Sir Ralph Abercrombie Anstruther of Balcaskie, Baronet, and in the old burying-place, still used as a cemetery by the Balcaskie family, stands the remains of the old grey parish church of Abercrombie, with its encircling lime-trees and its green ivy garment duskily investing its aged walls.

Dedicated to St Mary and St Margaret, tradition has deduced the origin of Abercrombie Church from the piety and wealth of two sisters similarly named.

About the middle of the twelfth century, the broad lands and swelling coffers of Sir Humphrey Abercrombie (failing male issue) devolved upon two maiden sisters, Mary and Margaret, only children of the baronet; and as both were young, and of unimpeachable descent—the true Norman blood mantling in every vein—the heiresses early became objects of absorbing interest in the eyes of such of the surrounding knights and thanes as could advance pretensions to as clear a shield and pure a lineage as their own.

Educated within the walls of the convent at Haddington, the sisters' limited experience and unripe notions of the world would have inadequately fitted them for the duties entailed upon them by their new position, were it not that nature had beneficently gifted the elder with a certain strength and self-reliance of character, imperfectly developed in the cloister, but daily expanding and maturing in a broader sphere, in proportion as circumstances

seemed to call it into action, and demand its vigorous exercise.

The younger was a graceful, gentle girl, gifted with rare beauty, and with a disposition as femininely soft and placid as the mild and dove-like eyes through which her soul looked out upon a world but newly revealed to her enfranchised gaze.

How was it, then, that thus differing—thus unlike in mind and feature—the high-souled Mary and the shrinking, soft-eyed Margaret should, almost simultaneously, have set their hearts on one object? Was it that, under the handsome exterior of her soldier-cousin, Philip de Candela, the elder sister recognised a spirit similar to her own? And was it that the pliant mind of Margaret, putting forth a host of tendrils—impulses, affections, sympathies—craved some object for support, something to cling to and weave themselves around, encircling what they garlanded? Was it in the harder nature of the soldier these budding tendrils found, as it were, a massive trunk wooing their embrace and strengthening their growth? Was it that the elder loved him for the perils he had undergone in Palestine and in France, the exciting scenes in which he had conspicuously borne a brave man's part, and for the spirit of daring and adventure by which he had been influenced in his busy brief career? We may know that it was so; that continued intercourse confirmed and ripened love; that Mary's ears were seldom regaled with tales of war and chivalry, while the songs of Provence were carolled with a frequency and fervour most gratifying, it would seem, to the happy, hopeful Margaret; and that, in short, the soldier and his soft-eyed cousin plighted their troth, and then irrevocably sealed it with a sacred union. The ceremonial was performed by St Monan, a hermit or religious recluse belonging to the Monastery of Pittenweem, which was sheltered in a recess amongst the banks, walls, and crevices at the

west end of the village of the same name, with a dusky-coloured mass of hard whinstone overhanging it behind, and a stair or gully winding past it in front. Haste and secrecy could be purchased then as now, and Philip and his bride were ferried across the frith, and landed at North Berwick, hours ere their lengthened absence had been noted by the elder sister as an unusual circumstance.

How fierce and violent a storm of passion then swelled within the disappointed sister's breast—how from her heart she cursed them bitterly, bridegroom and bride—how vowed an unmitigable hatred to them both—how every soft and womanly feeling seemed utterly extinct—how in their stead arose an intense, consuming thirst to be avenged—how, in fact, her whole nature seemed changed, and how she moodily immured herself within her Castle of Abercrombie, day after day, week after week, brooding upon the scornful slight which had been put upon her love, and upon the cunning, as she deemed it, of the sister who had supplanted her—it were a charity to the infirmities of our common nature to touch upon but lightly, and so pass on to after incidents.

Six months had scarcely run their course after the marriage, when the war broke out between Stephen, the unpopular usurper of the English throne, and his fair relative and competitor, Maude. Margaret's husband was among the first to join the standard of King David, and to fling himself within the ranks of those who opposed Stephen. Alas! he was among the first also to fall a victim to that sanguinary strife, being slain in a mere chance skirmish, into which his zeal and well-known bravery had unhappily led him.

Poor Margaret might well be overwhelmed by such a fearful and unlooked-for bereavement. Reason almost gave way; and during the time that partial delirium deprived her of consciousness, her husband's kinsmen mercifully consigned the gashed and ghastly corpse to its last

home, that the widow's eye might never look with agony upon the loved and distorted features of her slaughtered soldier.

When the elder sister heard of this sudden sharp calamity, her heart melted within her. In the presence of death, anger and hate, and jealousy, and wounded love, and baffled hope, stood solemnly rebuked. The cause of their disunion no longer found a place within their memory; but a more unclouded past, childhood and girlhood, the recollections of an era teeming with thoughts and images of love and tenderness—of a time when they two nestled their soft cheeks upon the same pillow, wove the same woof, shared the same rambles to Kellie-law and Kilconquhar Loch, to Macduff's Cave and Balcarras Craig—cherished the same dear rose-tree, wept and laughed, grew pale or crimson, sad or merry, as the same feelings swayed the hearts of both—came thronging to her mind; and as the past brought with it such gentle harmonising influences, why should they not renew it in the future? They had been too long widely and unwisely severed. Henceforth they would have, as they had had of yore, but one home and one heart.

Borne down, indeed, still almost distraught with grief, the younger yet could find a solace and a mitigation of her sorrow in her reunion with her elder sister; and when the latter fell upon the widow's bosom, and brokenly sobbed out her sorrow for the past, her grief for this last heavy stroke, and spoke of hope for better days, when suffering should be softened down by time, and submission soothe regret, her dark eyes kindled through her tears, and a faint smile, like a ray of fleeting sunshine gilding the blackness of the storm, played momentarily upon her compressed and pallid lips.

So the old Castle of Abercrombie received them once again, linked together by a closer tie—wiser and sadder both—the joyousness of youth displaced by thoughts of a graver, if not gloomier, texture, as though a few short months

had done the work of years, and prematurely stamped the feelings of a later epoch upon their youthful minds. Perhaps the solitude in which they lived, disposing them to ponder on the after destination of the soul, or perhaps the converse of a priestly adviser, anxious to aggrandise the church (for there was only *one* church then, and for three hundred years after there was no other, namely, the Church of Rome) of which he was a member; or perhaps that natural revulsion of the mind from matters of momentary to matters of imperishable importance, which results from worldly disappointment and domestic calamities, influenced them in coming to the determination to which they came; but whatever may have been the influences which operated on them, this alone is certain—that the sisters mutually resolved to *found a church*, and dedicate it to the service of the Almighty, in token of their reconciliation; purposing likewise to endow it at their decease with the personal wealth of which they were possessed.

At that time the whole surrounding country, or at least the muirland portion of it, was little better than a leafy wilderness, intersected by numerous bridle-ways, with here and there a broader track, offering a passage for the slow and cumbrous carts and sledges of those rude days. At scattered intervals large clearances had been made; and out of the old primeval trees, and with the aid of turf taken from the soil, and rushes gathered from the margin of the burns, rivulets, and lochs, groups of cottages were framed, windowless and chimneyless—a miserable shelter for the hardy cottars who tenanted them. A frank tenementer's more commodious abode, a smithy, or perhaps a huckster's store, were the only tenements that varied that otherwise uniform aspect of these primitive clachans. Wherever the ground swelled into anything like a reasonable eminence, the stronghold of a baron might be observed perched on the summit, while the circumjacent hollow would exhibit its ir-

regularly-clustered hovels, overlooked by the more massive and enduring residence of the rural magnate. Such churches, too, as then existed, were mostly built upon a rising ground, and seemed to serve as landmarks in that wild untravelled breadth of muir-moss and forest-land. It may be readily conceived, therefore, that at such a time, and in such a district, the rumour of the meditated erection in the first instance, and afterwards the commencement, continued progress, and completion of the sacred structure, were regarded as the gradual evolution of an event peculiarly important.

It was an event, moreover, that was regarded with the utmost satisfaction by the Romish Church, upon whose dignitaries, in due time, devolved the task of formally consecrating the edifice to the sacred object for which it was intended, and who purposed to lavish in the ceremonial all those adventitious aids by which the Church of Rome imparted a character of such imposing grandeur to every rite and ceremonial to which she lent her countenance, or in which she bore a part: and hence the consecration of this edifice, followed, or rather accompanied, by a solemn presentation of the sisters at the altar, in token of compunction for dissensions past, and thankfulness for love restored, was marked by features of such rare magnificence, by such impressive pomp, and such professional display, and witnessed by such a multitude of wondering spectators, gathered from far and near, that both the solemnity itself, and its strange issue, lived in the memories of succeeding generations for centuries afterwards.

On that solemnity we need not tarry to comment; our legend has reference to *its issue* only. As the sisters knelt before the altar, thus by a formal act to ratify their reconciliation in the sight of God and man, and the venerable diocesan, Bishop Arnold of St Andrews, bent down to give his benediction on them both, a flash of vivid lightning on a sudden filled the sacred edifice with a ruddy light, and a

rattling peal of thunder rolled, as it were, along the very roof of the building.

There was a hush—a silence that was almost audible—a deep, dead calm reigning for a space in every portion of the holy pile. Most of the congregation lay prostrate on the pavement; the sisters knelt upon the altar steps, with buried heads and clasped hands; the old prelate stood alone erect, and folding his hands upon his breast, with eyes uplifted and serene, at length emphatically said, "Thy will be done!" A thousand voices as by one impulse, blending into chaos, made response, "Amen, amen!"

And then the good old bishop, gently touching the kneeling sisters, bade them rise; but neither speech nor motion answered him, for still they knelt, with heads bowed low and fingers intertwined—with mute lips and eyelids drooping heavily. Again and yet again he would have them raised from their kneeling posture; but there was neither word nor sign; and then awe fell upon the hearts of all present, for they knew that *death* was there! The spirits of the sisters, forgiving and forgiven, had passed away, and doubtless angels and redeemed spirits had heralded them to the mansions of the blessed.

THE ROMANCE OF THE MAY.

The Isle of May, which lies at the mouth of the Forth, is about six miles from Crail, and is about a mile in length, and three-quarters in breadth. It has a well of excellent water, a small loch, and affords the finest pasturage for sheep.* The island contained a religious house and chapel dedicated to St Adrian, who was murdered by the Danes in 872, and buried at Anstruther-Wester, where his stone coffin is yet

* Two-year-old May wether mutton is said to be a feast worthy of the gods, if they would admit anything more substantial than ambrosia.

to be seen. The island belonged to the crown; King David afterwards presented it to the abbot and convent of Reading in Berkshire; and from this and many other valuable benefactions to the church, King James I., when he visited his tomb, three hundred years after, called him "a sair saint to the crown." From Prynne's records it appears that the abbot afterwards unwarrantably sold the island to William Lamberton, Bishop of St Andrews. It afterwards came into the possession of General Scott of Balcombie, whose daughter, the Duchess of Portland, sold it to the Commissioners of Northern Lights.

Some remarkable events are connected with this island. The first we shall advert to is the "Battle of the May."

Our readers have all doubtless heard or read of Sir Andrew Wood of Largo, a famous Scottish admiral in the reign of James III. In the year 1490, King Henry, the English monarch, mortified at the defeat of some of his ships by Admiral Wood the previous year, assembled his officers, and offered rewards to any of them who should take the sea against Sir Andrew, and bring him to him dead or alive. One Stephen Bull, a London merchantman, who, like Sir Andrew Wood, combined the pursuits of warfare and commerce, accepted the offer, and with three large ships set sail for the Frith of Forth, in order to get between Admiral Wood and the land on his return from Flanders, to which he had escorted a fleet of merchantmen.

The English ships anchored under shelter of the Isle of May; and Bull, having captured some sailors, compelled them to give him intelligence about Sir Andrew's movements.

Early by daybreak, on a fine summer morning, the 10th of August, Sir Andrew's two vessels, the one named "The Flower," and the other "The Yellow Carvel," were observed to come in sight, on which the English commander made preparations for engaging them, and distributed wine

amongst his men to raise their courage. With regard to the Scottish admiral, Pitscottie the historian says, "On the other hand, Sir Andrew Wood came portly forward, knowing no impediment of enemies to be in his gate, till at last he perceived their three ships under sail, and coming fast to them in fier of war. Then Sir Andrew Wood, seeing this, exhorted his men to battle, beseeching them to take courage against their enemies of England, who had sworn and made their vows that they should make us prisoners to the King of England, but, God willing, they shall fail of their purpose. Therefore set yourselves in order, every man in his own place. Let the gunners charge their artillery and the cors-bows make them ready; with the lyme-pots and fire-balls in our tops, and twe-handed swords in your forearms; and let every man be stout and diligent for his own part and for the honour of Scotland, and thereto he caused fill the wine, and every man drank to other."

The engagement that took place is described as being of the most desperate character. The Scottish admiral contrived to get to windward of the enemy. The fight lasted from sunrise to sunset, and was beheld by an immense crowd of men, women, and children on the coast of Fife. At last the two fleets were parted by the darkness, and drew off from each other, till the daylight next morning again enabled them to see what they were about.

The signal for a renewal of the engagement was then given by blowing of trumpets on both sides, when the two hosts encountered each other again, "and fought so cruely," says our historian, "that neither the skippers or mariners took heed of their ships," but allowed them to drift away with wind and tide till they reached as far as opposite the mouth of the Tay, the crews all the while contending hand to hand. At last the English admiral was compelled to yield, and to give up his sword to Sir Andrew Wood; and his three ships were then towed up to Dundee, where the

wounded were landed, and placed under medical care. A few days after, Sir Andrew, our brave countryman, presented the English admiral and his officers to his majesty, James, King of Scotland, who, so far from returning evil for evil, released and sent back Admiral Bull, his officers and men, with their vessels, and with rich gifts as a present to the English king. King Henry of England had thus, in addition to his vexation at this signal defeat, the humiliation of being obliged to acknowledge the generosity and princely bearing of the Scottish king, whom he had insulted and injured without the slightest provocation.

The next occurrence which we shall record is the melancholy accident which took place on the Island of May in January, 1791.

For two evenings no light was exhibited from the lighthouse, and the weather was such as no boat could put off to ascertain the cause. On the third day the storm abated, and a boat was manned from Crail. No sooner had the crew of the boat landed, than they were assailed by a strong sulphurous smell, and proceeding directly to the lighthouse, they found the door shut, and no one answered their call. Forcing an entrance, they saw the keeper, his wife, and five children, all lying suffocated, and a sixth infant sucking its dead mother. In another room were found two men almost expiring, but who, by the timely assistance rendered, providentially recovered. It was supposed that this sad accident was occasioned by some burning coals being blown among some cinders and refuse lying at the bottom of the lighthouse.

The last incident to which we shall refer is the boat disaster at the island in 1837.

On the 1st of July, 1837, a skipper and boat-owner belonging to Cellardyke set sail from that harbour, with a large party, on a pleasure excursion to the Isle of May. The day was fine and wind favourable, and the party,

chiefly young men and women, consisting of sixty-five persons, including the crew, were all in high spirits, having music on board, indulging freely in mirth and gaiety, and little thinking of the sad event impending over their heads, by which, in a little half-hour, so many of them were to perish.

Having approached close to the island, on the western side, it was not deemed fitting to land at the place called "the Stand," or "Atterstones," but to proceed round the southern end of the island to the eastern side thereof, with intention to disembark at a creek on the eastern side, called "Kirken Haven." In the attempt to enter this haven, there being a swell of the sea, or surge, setting in from the eastward at the time, the boat became unmanageable, and was violently driven against the shore; the *stem*, in consequence, having stuck fast on the rocks, while the *stern* floated in deep water, the swell or eddies, and broken water, upset or caused the boat to sink, and a great number of persons belonging to Anstruther, Cellardyke, and the neighbouring towns, were drowned. Of those, ten were young unmarried women, two married women, and one infant—in all, thirteen persons. One individual lost his wife, his mother, and his child; another, a young man, observing his sister and a young woman to whom he was warmly attached both struggling in the water, and sinking in the midst of furious breakers, boldly plunged into the boiling sea, and made his way to the perishing girls. And oh what a sight for those on shore, to see the noble-minded youth risking his life for those he loved! He supports both for some time; he comforts them with hopes of succour; but his strength begins to fail. What shall he do? Shall he part with one? and if so, which of the two? No; the idea is torment to him—he cannot for a moment entertain it. He will save both, or perish in the attempt. He sinks, and rises, and sinks again, with his precious burden.

The waters close over their heads—they are given up for lost. The two young women perish, but a huge wave casts the young man nearer the shore; his comrades on the beach make the most extraordinary efforts to save him, and he is at last rescued from the very jaws of death.

CALEB CRABBIN.

As a good theorising spirit in philosophy is the very soul of all progress in science, and the creatures that dabble in experiments with crucibles and retorts are no better than pioneers to the great geniuses that combine and generalise, so some think it an undoubted truth that speculation is the great spirit of commerce (including, of course, in the articles of that commerce, *wives*), and that those who do not make a bold stroke seldom make an effectual one. In no department of commerce is speculation held of greater importance than in that of marriage; and how rare is it to find a man who thoroughly understands it—if, indeed, it may not be said that ninety-nine out of a hundred do not know even the difference between buying and selling. The women marriage-traders, indeed, form a very creditable exception, because every one of them—knowing very well, for a surety, that they have on hand a stock that does not improve by keeping—are sellers, out and out; while the males again are almost all buyers, though, if they had the sense of a tortoise, they might know that they have just as good a stock to dispose of as their fair customers. There are, doubtless, some exceptions in our sex that go far to retrieve our characters; but, alas! they are very few; and it is just on that very account that we think it proper to give some account of Mr Caleb Crabbin, hosier in the Lawnmarket in Edinburgh—so great a genius in the department to which we have alluded, that he discovered that all mongering in blankets and stockings was a perfect bagatelle in comparison of the profitable disposal of his own person; and no sooner did he make the discovery than

he acted upon it, with all the boldness that belongs to original thinkers.

The worthy we have thus mentioned favourably—because we admire a supporter of the rights of free trade—had laboured for a period of six or eight years in disposing of articles of hosiery, for every one of which he paid a high price; and, whether it was that he could not buy to advantage—his genius, probably, not lying in that way—or that he could not sell with a profit, wherein he displayed the same want of natural tact—it is certain that he became a bankrupt about as soon as other people merely begin to see they might make "a good thing" of a stop. So he wound up cleverly, and made just as little of his bankruptcy—a matter of profit often to those who are mere bunglers in the department of solvency—and took it into his head to sell himself. So, accordingly, as chance would have it, he threw his eyes on Miss Belinda Yellowlees, who combined the two comely properties of wealth and weakness—in other words, she possessed a thousand pounds, and a very bad constitution; and here it was that Caleb's properties began to be manifested; for the man who thought himself not worth one farthing—and was, in fact, not worth more, in the estimation of any of his own sex—was proved to be worth no less than a thousand pounds, at which price Miss Yellowlees bought him, and thought, too, that she had got a very good bargain. Seldom, indeed, it happens that both buyer and seller, in a transaction of pure business concerns, think that they have made a hit; yet, of a surety, it was the case in this marriage; for Mr Caleb Crabbin actually conceived that he had made as good a bargain as did Miss Belinda Yellowlees; and so, to be sure, it was soon proved, by an exceeding good probatory test; for Miss Belinda, within six months, went the way of the dead, and her thousand pounds went the way of the living—that is, into the possession of her surviving husband.

No one will deny that this was undoubtedly a good beginning in this new commercial enterprise of Mr Caleb; and the best feature of the whole transaction was, that, along with the thousand pounds, he had actually got back again the commodity which he gave for it, and was thereby in a capacity to dispose of it again, on far better terms than ever. Many a good article of hosiery he had disposed of over the counter, and never seen a single glimpse again either of the price or the article; whereas here there was all the difference in the world; for he held the possession of both—the thing sold, and the price got for it; and, stimulated by his success, he, as soon as decency would permit, set about again endeavouring to make a bargain, upon the same, or better, terms than before. Nor was he long about encompassing his object; for the money he had got by the first transaction yielded a facility to the progress of the second; and, within a year of the death of the first unfortunate, Mrs Belinda Crabbin, he, after a hunt comprehending nearly all that period, found out an individual not only in every way worthy of his attention, but exhibiting all the features of being as good a market-woman as he was an out-and-out trader. The lady, whose name was Miss Amelia Reddie—clearly an orthographic phase of the cognomen Ready—was eager, or "yape," as the Scotch call it, for a transaction; and, having nothing to boast of but her patrimony of twelve hundred and fifty, she made the most of what she had; and the never a man of all she had ever spoken to but knew, as well as he did the number of his own fingers, the exact sum, to the odd fifty, which she was willing to give as the consideration. Many a dozen of suitors had heard her set forth her mercantile recommendation; but, then, she was the last of five, who had all died of consumption, leaving her the heir of the small sums that belonged to them; and this fact, which she tried assiduously to conceal, had, in a great measure, destroyed her saleable

capability, till the time when there appeared in the mart Mr Caleb, who, instead of deeming it an objection, thought it the consideration next best to the amount of her funds. Well, without exhausting a lexicon upon the affair, we come to the point, as cleverly as did the hero himself, who was, in the thirteenth month after the death of his first wife, duly and lawfully put in possession of Miss Amelia Reddie and her twelve hundred and fifty.

"A deuced deal better than hosiery this!" said Caleb to himself, on his marriage night; "for here have I not made two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds in one year and a month, without ever a shop, or signboard, or risk or trouble at all!"

If we were to say that there was an atom of affection in a concern of this kind, we would assuredly be doing not only Mr Caleb a great injustice, but be committing a libel on the taste of our sex; and, to be sure, save for the money, there was none at all. But we have more to say; and that is, that, where a man does not love the woman (as why should he?) whom he has married for money, it follows, as a natural corollary, that he wishes her dead. With "a trembling hand," like that of the poet Tibullus, he would hold the fair one, when dying; but then the hand would tremble lest she should recover, not lest she should go the way of all flesh. But, alas for the plans of mortals! the greatest geniuses sometimes fail in noble undertakings; and, not long after Mr Crabbin had begun to discover ailing symptoms on the part of his helpmate, the truth broke upon him that he was about to become a father; and a father, too, in good time, he became, of as healthy a child as ever blessed a living husband who liked his wife.

"If I am to have half-a-dozen, or mayhap a dozen, of these," said he, "the devil a merchant that ever sold cheaper than he bought, ever made so bad a bargain. Every one of these creatures will cost, at least, three hun-

dred pounds; so that, if I shall have six of them, I will be a loser to the extent of five hundred and fifty."

The speech was prophetic; for every year, for a period of six, the consumptive Mrs Amelia Crabbin presented her husband with a healthy pledge; and on every birth-day Mr Caleb made a speech almost the same, but with increased lugubrity. But for this he might have found very good authority among the ancients; and if he had known of that strange man who wept at the birth of a child, or of Xenophon, who continued the job of a sacrifice he was at, though a messenger told him of the death of his boy, he would have thought them very sensible men, of a very different kidney from the fool, John Zopilah, who died of joy, when he heard that his wife had brought him an heir male. But it availed Mr Caleb nothing.

"Better," said he, "I had stuck by the counter; for I might have become bankrupt as often as I chose; and, if I had made the never a penny by it, I might at least have got quit of my creditors; but children are a sort of creditors that a man cannot sweep off by any means, not even the famous cessio."

And what made the matter more intolerable was, that all this time, when Mrs Crabbin was thriving so excellently well, in the way of adding to the number of the human species, she was gradually declining in health, having, by the time she had the third child, become so lean and shrivelled, that neither the Atlas nor the Hercules would have insured her life at a premium of fifty per cent. Yet, as we have said, three more followed in good time, and healthier creatures never opened their eyes on an evil world. Mrs Amelia Crabbin had now, however, done her worst; and, having been wasted away to a mere sigh, she one night took Mr Caleb round the neck, and, weeping bitterly, told him she was going, in the midst of her prosperity, to where she once thought she would have gone six years before—

even where her five sisters were—the grave; recommending to him to take care of the twelve hundred and fifty, for the sake of the six children she had left, as every penny of it, and more, would be needed by the dear orphans. Mr Caleb wept too; but it was at the touching allusion she had made to the danger she had escaped, of dying before the first of the children was born; and Mrs Amelia, seeing what she conceived to be undoubted evidence of his affection, hung awhile upon his neck, and then bid him bring in every one of the six. They were accordingly ranged by the side of her bed.

"Now, my little ones," she said to them, tenderly, "Caleb, Andrew, Maria, George, Amelia, and Augustus, your mother is going to die, and you may never see her again after this hour. Mr Crabbin," she continued, looking to her husband, "you must know that these children are the last of the blood of our Reddies, and proud am I to think that it has pleased Heaven that I should be the means of thus leaving so many scions of our ancient race, that there is no chance of the name being forgotten, seeing that they have all three names, the middle one being Reddie in every instance. I hope they will multiply as I have done. Bless you, my dear children! Your father will protect you; and thankful am I that the twelve hundred and fifty is yet all left, so that you will get your shares when you come to be of age."

In an hour afterwards Mrs Amelia Crabbin was no more, and in three days afterwards she was buried.

"It is finished," said the husband; "and a fair speculation never turned up an uglier balance, since the days of the bubble of the South Sea."

So he took to real weeping; and there was not a friend that came to give him consolation, but went away with the impression that he had been one of the most loving of husbands, and was one of the tenderest of men. Among those

visiters, were two or three acquaintances of his deceased wife, and one or two of them possessed even more than twelve hundred and fifty. So, Mr Caleb, seeing through his wet eyes that his grief took with them very well, continued the indications—a very easy process, seeing he had only to look to the debit and credit of his speculation to make the tears drop as fast as hailstones.

"It's a heavy loss you have sustained, Mr Crabbin," said Miss Jean Gibbs.

"Very heavy loss," rejoined he, with emphasis on the principal word.

"But the children are a consolation."

"To be sure they are," answered Caleb; "and I have six of them, and now, you see, all without a female to take charge of them."

The hint did not take, as the saying goes; and Miss Jean having departed, and Miss Isabella Gentle, who had also a competency, having arrived, he tried the same plan with her; for his spirit for speculation was still strong; and he expected, yet, to make a far more successful hit than he had even done in the case of Miss Belinda Yellowlees. Now, Miss Isabella was just as sincere in her admiration of his sorrow as was Miss Jean Gibbs; and all that was gone over about the loss he had sustained, and the consolation of the children, and the feeling he exhibited, as became a good husband and a loving father. But the moment he made a hint about the poor creatures having no female to look after them, the same effect was as evident as in the case of Miss Jean—for Miss Isabella, for a certainty, did not seem to relish it.

"All this may come of my being too eager and too soon," said he. "But I fear these six children will be stumbling-blocks in the way of my farther enterprise; for a woman will not give so much for a man with six children, as she would do for himself. Had my second transaction come up

to the first, I might to-day have been an independent man. But a third may do better; and, if it don't, it shall not, by Hymen, be Mr Caleb Crabbin that will be to blame."

Nor, indeed, could it be alleged that he spoke falsely; for, as soon as the proper time came, he set about a very vigorous search for a third helpmate in every direction where he thought he had any chance. He tried again Miss Jean Gibbs and Miss Isabella Gentle; but the children formed an objection which they could not get over.

"I will never marry a man with six children—no—nor five, nor four, nor three, nor two," said Miss Jean.

"I would far rather live and die an old maid, than become the slave of another woman's family," was the reply of Miss Isabella.

And then he tried Miss Julia Cross, who had something of a lying stock, though not much, and her answer was just as peremptory.

"I hold the woman to be mad, Mr Caleb Crabbin," said she, "who would undertake the charge of six children. One might as well become a schoolmistress at once."

And after this rebuff, he tried Miss Angelina Crabbe, who had an annuity of somewhere about seventy-five pounds, besides about three hundred of old savings; but Angelina said that she would not be a stepmother for the whole earth.

"I see it will not do," said he, after some farther rejections. "Unless I take a wife with nothing, I will never get another, where it is known that I am burdened with six children. But he who takes a wife with nothing is but a sorry trafficker; and the never a wife with nothing, were she as fair as Venus, will Caleb Crabbin marry in this world. I will pack off the whole crew, and try my fortune under other colours."

The resolution thus formed he put in execution, by getting the whole of his children boarded with friends who

lived at a distance, upon the pretence that he was going to take a trip away somewhere abroad. Having achieved this preliminary, he set off for the nearest good watering-place, being no other than the noted Pitcaithly, where so many "wanters," have, with various success, been supplied; and he had not been a week there when he fell in with a buxom widow of five-and-thirty, who was reported as being worth not a jot less than one hundred and fifty pounds a-year, secured on the strong Atlas, by the providence of her deceased husband. The name she carried, Mrs Jemima Bowsie, was a mixture of her own maiden name and the surname of her husband, very well blended; and she carried herself with such an air of frankness, surrounded with the eclat of her fortune, which she had taken care to blaze pretty well, that Mr Caleb Crabbin was immediately struck.

"That is my mark," said he, "as sure as was Belinda Yellowlees; and, if I'm not worth the purchase at one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, on the life of Mrs Jemima Bowsie, I have lost all my saleable commodity."

One who had twice sold himself, and offered himself for sale a score of times over, had no difficulty in getting matters placed in a train for a new offer; and an hour had scarcely elapsed after the monologue we have mentioned, when Mr Caleb Crabbin and Mrs Jemima Bowsie were walking and talking together as if they had been acquainted from the period of conning the alphabet. Nor was their intimacy long limited to talking a-field; for he found his way to the house where she lodged, and she found her way to the house where he had taken up his quarters, and, in the course of these meetings, mutual hints and questions tended towards the expression of mutual wishes.

"By the way, Mr Crabbin," said Mrs Jemima, one evening when they were sitting together in her lodgings, "I have a question to put to you; and, as you respect a widow, left,

as it were, alone in the world, you will answer me according to your conscience."

"That will I, Mrs Bowsie," answered Caleb, "as sincerely as if you were my wedded wife."

"That is tenderly and beautifully indited, Mr Crabbin," answered she. "Pray, sir, is the Atlas a strong company?"

"I believe it is a very strong concern, madam," replied he; "not much less so, I fancy, than the Royal, where I happen to have two thousand pounds deposited on an operating account. But might I have the great boldness, madam, to ask you why you put that question to me?"

"I am not sure," replied Mrs Jemima; "yet, let me see. Why, there can't be much harm in it either, only one does not like to trumpet forth her private affairs. But then it is to be remembered that I am a lonely creature in the world; and to whom can an unprotected widow speak, if it isn't to one who is just in her own situation?—for you hinted to me that your wife has gone, and left you also solitary."

"Too true," answered Caleb, affecting some ocular moisture. "My house is indeed empty enough. Indeed I have the key of it in my pocket; and one who has the never a one to speak to at home just wanders about where the fancy lists."

"How our positions and sentiments *do* coincide!" replied she. "Well, as to the reason for my putting the question about the strength of the Atlas; this," she continued, as she opened a box, and took out a policy—"this may explain it." And she handed the policy to Mr Caleb Crabbin.

"An annuity policy for one hundred and fifty, for the natural life," said he, as he affected surprise at what he knew as well as he did the amount of the sums possessed by his two deceased wives. "A handsome thing, madam, of a certainty."

"Very well for two single people," rejoined she, sentimentally; "but believe me, sir, I would not have put the question, had it not been that a female is apt to get nervous where her all is laid out on the security of one concern."

"There need be never a tone of apology about the matter, madam; for, to be plain with you, I often make inquiries about the stability of the Royal, where, as I told you, I have two thousand pounds deposited on an operating account; and, to be plainer still, I do not hesitate to tell you, madam, that my house being, as I said, locked up in these gloomy days of my widowhood, I carry about with me my receipt. Here it is." (Opening his pocket-book.) "You may take a glance at it just as I have done at your policy. Giff-gaff, as we say, makes good friends."

"And you have just hit upon the very reason," replied she, "why I carry about my policy with me; for, where there is no one at home to take an interest in one's affairs, or a charge of their effects, one feels uneasy about a valuable document, such as these in our hands. Of course you do not tell any one of the question I put to you; because, you know, the Atlas might come on me for damages."

"No fear on't, madam," said Caleb; "but pray—hem! hem!—is it your intention, Mrs Bowsie, ever again to change your name?"

"And, pray, Mr Crabbin," replied she, holding away her head, "is it your intention ever to give yours to another woman?"

"The never a doubt on't, madam," rejoined Mr Caleb. "Loneliness is poor company; and I would marry to-morrow, were it for nothing else than to produce some stir of life in my deserted house."

"And, for society's sake, I would almost be tempted to change condition, too," rejoined she, rising to put past the policy and conceal her blushes.

Unluckily, at this interesting moment, an acquaintance entered, and put an end to a conversation that was clearly tending towards a crisis, to which the boldness of Mr Caleb would soon have brought it. But enough had been said to dream upon; and by the time that the two met next day in the woods, the matter had been arranged in the minds of both. The question was "popped," a gracious answer returned, and, as Caleb had clearly induced her to believe, without any direct statement, that he had not a single child to mar Mrs Jemima's happiness, he saw the necessity of getting the transaction concluded without the loss of a moment of time, lest discoveries might break it up. But the widow was just as anxious for quick despatch as he was; and he did not fail to take advantage of so favourable a circumstance. So to Perth he went, and got all things put in readiness for a proclamation of banns. This preliminary was gone through on the following Sunday; on the Monday after, Mr Caleb Crabbin and Mrs Jemima Bowsie were man and wife; and thus had Caleb disposed of himself, for the third time, on terms which he conceived to form the elements of a good bargain.

These matters we have run over rapidly, leaving it, of course, to be understood that several explanations—such as the localities of their locked-up houses, their connections, and so forth, were mutually made and mutually relied on; and it becomes us, in the same manner, to leave to the fancy all the pretty excursions and conversations that lasted for the legitimate period of the sweet moon, at the end of which the couple arrived in Edinburgh to take possession of the husband's deserted house. And, to be sure, the house was empty enough, in so far as regarded human beings; for there was no one in it, and Mrs Jemima Crabbin surveyed it as her future home with no small expression of satisfaction. A new servant was got. A week passed, and all was as it should be—not a word of the six children having,

as yet, been uttered by Caleb, and no one of the neighbours having taken it upon them to supply the want of knowledge which Caleb conceived to be necessary to a continuation of his happiness. On the eighth day, they went out together to draw the quarterly annuity from the agent of the Atlas Company; and never was a man better pleased with himself than Caleb, when he pocketed the thirty-seven pounds ten shillings, the first earnest of many drawings, even so long as the life of his helpmate. This was clearly not fated to last; because it behoved Caleb to make the necessary disclosure, to prevent its being made, perhaps, in a manner fraught with more pain to her who apparently looked forward to a life of genteel ease. It was clear that the sooner the disclosure was made the better; and a stronger cup of tea than usual (brewed on the head of the quarter's annuity) having been served up, he sat ruminating on the best way of breaking the intelligence.

"What are you thinking of, Mr Crabbin?" said the lady, as she sat filling out the first cup of tea, and while the door stood open that the servant might bring in the toast.

"There he is, you little darlings," said Mrs Reddie of Pennicuick, as she entered; and at the same instant Master Caleb Reddie Crabbin, Master Andrew Reddie Crabbin, and Miss Maria Reddie Crabbin, rushed forward with a united cry of "Papa! papa! papa!" and hung round his neck, and jumped on his knee, with a demonstration of affection that a father, in ordinary circumstances, would have been delighted to see.

"I couldna keep them awa, sir," said the woman. "They would be in, reason or nane."

Mrs Crabbin sat with the teapot in her hand, held nearly as high as her mouth, and contemplated the affectionate scene, with open lips and wide staring eyes; but never a word had Mr Caleb said, though the dear little ones hugged him more fondly than ever.

"Are these your children, Mr Crabbin?" at last said the wife.

Caleb looked at her, and saw something like a smile playing round the corner of her lips, in the midst of sufficient indications of surprise; but the meaning thereof transcended all his powers of construction.

"The children, you hear, say I'm their father," replied he, still gazing in her face, to try if he could catch again the same symptom he had observed before; and, to be sure, he did catch it, and, with it, another symptom that astonished him more still; for Mrs Crabbin immediately ejaculated—

"Why did you not tell me of this, Mr Crabbin? What nice, dear, sweet creatures! I'm delighted to see them. Come to me, George; come to me, Andrew; and, Maria, you are the prettiest little girl in the world."

"What an amiable wife I have got!" ejaculated he, as he saw her take the little ones and fondle them as kindly as if they had been her own.

"When saw ye the others," said Mrs Reddie—"George, Amelia, and Augustus? Are they weel aneugh?"

"Three more!" ejaculated Mrs Crabbin.

And Caleb again searched her face, to see if there was not some irony lurking about the muscles; but the never a trace could he find but satisfaction. He was puzzled as never man was puzzled since the days of Œdipus.

"Have I been at all these pains," muttered he, "to conceal what yields her pleasure rather than chagrin?"

"Now, Mr Crabbin," said his wife, as she still fondled the children, "you must send to-morrow for the others, that I may see them; for I long to show them that I shall be as kind to them as would have been their own mother."

"The never such another woman is to be found in all Christendom!" muttered Caleb.

"Jenny," cried Mrs Crabbin, "bring cups here, that the children may have their tea."

And so the cups were brought; and the whole group, Mrs Reddie—whose mouth had been closed up by the effect of the extraordinary scene—included, sat down in the most perfect harmony.

On the very next day, a messenger was sent off for Master George Reddie Crabbin, Miss Amelia Reddie Crabbin, and Master Augustus Reddie Crabbin; and they were expected to arrive at the house of their father within three days afterwards. Meanwhile, Mrs Crabbin displayed still the same degree of kindness she had at first exhibited; and Caleb continued to wonder more and more at conduct that seemed to set at defiance all the matrimonial maxims he had got proved to him by the many women he had solicited to become his wife. Nor can there be a doubt that he was pleased—if, indeed, it might not be said that he was delighted; for it cannot be denied that the weight of the secret he had carried about had materially interfered with his connubial happiness; and even the light of the honeymoon had been dashed with streaks of shade, thrown up from the cavern where the dread fact had lain concealed.

On the day on which the additional children were expected, Mrs Crabbin was occupied in making preparations for their home-coming. A thousand little matters were gone about with maternal assiduity; and, everything having been arranged, the couple and the three children sat down to tea, much in the same spirit they had done on the previous occasion. It was about five o'clock; and the coach would arrive somewhere about that time.

"Here they come at last," said Caleb, as he listened to a tread of many steps on the stair, accompanied by the clear clack of the tongues of happy children.

And, to be sure, in they came; but there happened to be no fewer than five, accompanied by an old nurse; and they

had no sooner entered, than they ran forward to Mrs Crabbin, crying out "Mamma! mamma! mamma!" all together, and hanging round her neck, and kissing her, and climbing on her knees, just in the same affectionate manner that had been exhibited by Mr Crabbin's children on the prior occasion.

Meanwhile, Mrs Jemima Crabbin was busy with the face of Mr Caleb, to see what she could find there; but the man, who never had any great sense of justice, showed no smile, as she had done when *his* children came so unexpectedly in upon her. A sombre gloom covered his face, and he sat and looked as glum as he did on every occasion when Mrs Amelia Crabbin had brought him a child; and, probably, if there had been any deeper shade, or rather five times as deep as that expression, it would have found a place upon his face.

"Are all these your children, madam?" said Caleb, with a voice that expressed with the question a tendency to choke.

"Yes," answered Mrs Crabbin; "but you see, my dear sir, you beat me; for, while I have only five, you have six."

"Eleven of a family to support on two thousand pounds of principal, at four per cent., and one hundred and fifty per annum on the life of Mrs Jemima Crabbin!" groaned Mr Caleb. "A deuced poor trafficker I am proved to be! Would I not have been better as a hosier?"

"A hosier!" ejaculated Mrs Crabbin. "I took you for a gentleman, as Mr Frederick Bowsie was, every inch of him."

"And I took you for a solitary widow, as you led me to believe," responded he.

"And so, to be sure, I took you for a solitary widower, carrying the key of your house in your pocket, as you previously told me," was the just reply.

At this juncture the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the other three Crabbins, who acted over again the scene of their brothers and sister; and thus there were brought on the carpet no fewer than eleven of a family, one-half strangers to their half-brothers and sisters, and all talking, and laughing, and romping in a manner that might have afforded no small joy to well-conditioned parents. Yet Mr Caleb was not to be cajoled by their fun into anything like good humour, for no man likes to behold the evidence of the almost total defeat of a darling project, which he had held to be the pride and profit of his existence. Nor was the bringing of eight more tea-cups, instantly ordered by Mrs Crabbin, likely to effect what the romping of the "dear ones" had not been able to accomplish; and it is impossible to say how long he would have remained under the cloud of his gloom, had not Mrs Crabbin risen, and, going round to him by the backs of the circle of children, gently and playfully clapped him on the hanging clouded cheek.

"Come, now, Mr Crabbin," said she, "you see we are just in the position of the pot and kettle that fell into warfare, calling each other blackamores. You have cheated me, and I have cheated you, and therefore are we on a par. No good can come of complaining where each has so good a rejoinder; and, to be plain with you, if you gloom, I'll gloom, having just as good a right; whereas, if you are well pleased, and love my five, I shall be well pleased, and love your six; and thus we may make the best of a bad bargain. What say you, Mr Caleb Crabbin?"

Caleb threw his eye around the table, and groaned; but necessity is a strong monitor; and so he turned round—where there was a matrimonial kiss awaiting him—and, having taken the offering for better and for worse—

"I believe, Jemima, you are right, after all," said he; "but still it is a bad business; for, if we add five or six

more children to that small army, we may come to starve."

"You can begin business again as a merchant (but not in the hosiery way) with your two thousand, and I shall be as frugal a wife as ever made the two ends of coming and going out meet."

Caleb meditated.

"You are right again, Jemima," said he; "for, after all, I have not been happy under the trade of wiving I have driven for so many years—always idle, and pointed out as one who lives on the means of his wives—so, to be sure, I'll immediately betake myself to an honourable calling, and before I die I may yet acquire the reputation of what is called a respectable member of society. For true it is," he added, "that a fortune-hunter, even if he has run down the game of thousands, is only a fortune-hunter to the end of the chapter. Out of my evil, you see, has come my good; and you, who a little ago seemed my bad angel, have turned out to be my good. So here be all our strife ended."

And another embrace settled the affair.

"Now," said Caleb, "you'll be kind enough to tell me the names of these children. By my faith, they are pretty ones—as pretty as my own!"

"This is William—this is George—this is Andrew—this is Mary—and this is Margaret."

"Well, we must fall upon some way of distinguishing those of mine and those of yours, who carry the same name. Let it be your George and my George, your Andrew and my Andrew. I see now no difficulty about the matter."

"Neither do I," answered Jemima. "All we have to provide against is to avoid calling our own *mutual* children George or Andrew, for a third of the name wouldn't do."

"Neither it would," rejoined he.

According to these arrangements, Mr Crabbin commenced business again; and, having been taught experience by his former failure, did very well. We believe there were at least two or three additional children born afterwards; but that was of no consequence, because Mr Crabbin's means became, by his own industry, proportionate. A good lesson hangeth by the peg of our tale, or we are somewhat out.

THE SERJEANT'S TALES.

THE IMPRUDENT MARRIAGE.

SERJEANT SQUARE again resumed the narrative of his adventures:—

There is a strange feeling, that every reflecting person must have often been conscious of, accompanying the idea of time. We feel as if in contact with the past, as far back as our memory can reach. If our reading has been extensive, it requires reflection to disentangle the events of early ages, as well as those of a more recent date; and, even as regards the time to come, we feel as if it also were for us, until the melancholy certainty of the shortness of life forces us back upon the present moment, which, until passed, we cannot call our own. Neither is there a situation in which we can be placed, in which we do not feel some cause of uneasiness, from the faintest shade of unfulfilled anticipation, to the depth of real suffering.

Gloomy were the reflections that haunted my mind for the first three weeks after my arrival in London. Often and far as I had been from Scotland, never until now had I been home-sick—if it could be called so in one who had neither kindred nor home in the world. Destitute of kindred as I was, the feeling seemed to extend my relationship: every Scotchman being my relation, and his accents music to my ears. An unaccountable melancholy was upon me; and I felt a strange presentiment as if some evil were about to befall me. I felt no pleasure, as I was wont, in walking about. My time was spent at my lodgings, in Lower Thames Street, save when I went occasionally to the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, to visit Captain H—. Even

these visits had become irksome, as no good seemed likely to arise to me from them. I was always received in the most friendly manner. Still there was a constraint upon me I could not overcome, arising from the relative situation in which we had formerly stood towards each other as private seaman and captain. I would have felt far more at my ease had he treated me in a more distant manner. Frugal as my mode of life was, my cash were done apace, and I had fixed upon no mode of obtaining a new supply. Once or twice I had made inquiries among the shipping for a situation, without success. Perhaps the fault was my own, as I was rather nice to please, and not over anxious to go to sea if I could do better. I hoped that the captain or his friend would propose something for my advantage; and thus the time had run on, while my lowness of spirits increased upon me. The weather had become wet and foggy. I cared not to leave the house, and remained at home for several days, so depressed that I even wished I were dead, and away from a world in which I had suffered so much. The pleasures I had also enjoyed were entirely blotted out from my recollection. All my life appeared to have been a scene of suffering, with no prospect before me but further misery and endurance.

This was a state of mind that could not long endure without leading to a fatal result. I began to regard suicide as the only remedy for my misery; and even to look upon it as a crime of no very deep atrocity. Yet there was a feeling within me that made death as a remedy horrible. At length, by an effort that cost me more to accomplish than anything I had ever done before or since, I shook off this, the darkest moral incubus of the darkest period of my life, and, after an absence of ten days, waited upon Captain H—— to bid him farewell, as I was resolved to leave London, and enter on board the first vessel wherever bound for, and in any capacity I could obtain a berth. When I reached

the house, I found it shut up, and could obtain no information whither he had gone. All I learned was, that they had left the house three days before, it was believed for the country. I felt indignant and hurt, although I had no reason, at this sudden departure. I had no claim upon him. I had ever been overpaid for any service I had rendered. Still, this was not my feeling at the time; and I bent my steps towards my lodgings in no enviable mood, either with myself or the world. A numbing sensation was upon me. I felt once more alone in the world; and passed through the busy crowds that thronged the streets, almost unconscious of the presence of a human being, until I had reached Tower Hill, when my attention was roused by a crowd of men and boys, who were hooting and jostling an old man of rather respectable appearance, whose impatient anger caused them only to increase their shouts and annoyance. They were calling to him, "Rebel Scot," and "Scottish traitor;" and crying, "Roll him in the kennel," "Duck him in the river." I was in a humour to quarrel with any one, or even dare a host. My blood was on fire in a moment, for the old man upbraided them in Scotch, although tinctured by a foreign accent. He was tall, and had once been a very powerful man. His hat had been knocked off, and his grey hairs were in disorder, save what were retained by a neat cue that bobbed from side to side, as he was pushed, or turned to aim a blow at his cowardly assailants, many of whom, I blush to say, had reached man's estate. In an instant I was by his side, and shouted, to overtop the noise—

"For shame, to use an old man and a stranger so! Is that like Englishmen?"

For a moment there was a pause; it was but for a moment. My Scottish accent turned them as much against me as him whom I wished to befriend.

"They are both rebel Scots—serve them alike!" shouted

a stout young fellow, as he aimed a blow at me. The others joined in the cry. The blow took effect upon the side of my head. I was stunned a little; but returned it with so good effect that he staggered back a pace or two. The blood flowed from my cheek, which was cut, pretty fast. In a moment the shouting ceased, and "A ring! a ring!" was the cry. "Give the Scottish sailor fair play—he has pluck in him." "Go it, Joe!" cried others; and their attention was directed from the old man to me and my opponent. A ring was formed. I gave my jacket and hat to the old man to hold, and to it we went; but, tall as I was and stout, I was forced to give in after a severe contest; my enemy's science prevailed; but my object was attained. The old man and myself were no longer hated. "I was a bit of good stuff," they said, "and had stood well up to fighting Joe of Smithfield." Even Joe said he would give any one a beating who molested us. We were conducted to a public-house, where I got myself cleaned and my bruises dressed. The old gentleman gave me a thousand thanks for the part I had taken in his rescue, and seemed to feel much more for the injuries I had received than I did myself. As soon as we had had some slight refreshment, he caused a coach to be brought, and accompanied me to my lodgings. During our short drive, I learned that he had only arrived from Holland the evening before, and was a stranger in London. He said he had resided for the last ten years there; that he had not been in Scotland for many years; and that he was on his way to it to lay his bones in the graves of his fathers. There was a reservedness of manner that interested me much in the man; and every time I looked to him, I grew the more certain that his face had been familiar to me at some former period of my life. Even his voice fell on my ear like some well-known sound. Neither of us had inquired the name of the other. The coach stopped at the door of my lodging, into which he assisted me; and I im-

mediately went to bed at his request, he promising to call upon me in the morning.

After passing a restless night, I was awoke in the morning by my landlady entering my room to inquire if I would see Lieutenant Speare, the old gentleman who had accompanied me home the evening before. Although I felt rather feverish, I replied that I would be glad to see him. In a few minutes I was astonished to see him enter in an undress, until he informed me that he had been so fortunate as to obtain a room from my landlady; and, if I was agreeable, he wished to breakfast along with me and spend the day, as I was not, he felt assured, in a state to leave my room. I did not conceal that I felt very unwell, and would be happy to have his company. After he was seated, I inquired by what accident he had become involved with the rabble upon Tower Hill. After a short pause—

"You and I," replied he, "are countrymen, but strangers to each other. From the disinterested manner in which you interfered in my behalf, I feel that I may trust you with my secret. Even if we differ in opinion, you will not betray me; I therefore shall make no reserve.

"I was born and bred an adherent of the exiled royal family of Great Britain; have bled in their cause; suffered exile from all I held dear; and even now I tread my native land with a halter about my neck, which one word from you might attach to the fatal tree that has ceased to have any horrors for me, were it not for a sacred duty I have to perform before death put a period to my long life of suffering. Yesterday afternoon I had only been a few hours in London, for the first time in my life; yet its gloomy Tower, and blood-drinking Tower Hill, had long been familiar to my mind, as scenes of cruelty and tyranny, where the best blood of Scotland was poured out like water to satisfy the thirst of a usurper. I had surveyed the scene for some time in silent agony, when my oppressed feelings called be-

fore me the heroes, as I had seen and admired them, in manly vigour, struggling in a righteous cause, with the sad termination they experienced, when their headless trunks were insulted by an unfeeling crowd. All caution left me, and I expressed my thoughts aloud. I was overheard and assailed. You delivered me. I acknowledge my imprudence; and, on your account, lament what I have done."

"On my account there is no cause of regret," said I. "I am happy your unguarded language had no more fatal result. You secret is safe in my keeping. I myself have been a sufferer through that fatal affair, although too young to distinguish between parties; for the miseries of civil war fall heaviest upon the innocent, the females and children. By it I was deprived of both my parents, and thrown destitute upon the world, without friends or home. If the great will struggle, urged by ambition or party zeal, what have the poor to do with their strife, who can, at the best, only change their taskmasters? Had my father remained in Edinburgh, my mother had not broken her heart, and I had not been an outcast orphan boy."

"Edinburgh, did you say, young man?" replied he. "Few joined the Prince from that city." His voice faltered; his whole frame shook. He gazed fixedly upon me for a short time; then, starting to his feet, he staggered to my bedside, supporting himself by the bedpost. "What is your name?" he eagerly said.

"John Square," I replied.

Uttering a cry that resembled a heavy groan, he sunk upon the bed, and, grasping my hand, bathed it with tears; then, clasping me to his breast, kissed my forehead. His heart was too full to speak; he held me in his embrace, and gazed upon my face. I was so much amazed at the strange conduct of the old man, that it was some time before I recovered from my surprise, or could inquire the cause of his, to me, unaccountable proceeding. Still grasping my hand—

"Now, welcome death!" said he. "My mission is accomplished. I shall die in peace. I have found thee, my long-forsaken and injured boy."

It was now my turn to feel the utmost agitation. Did my father really stand before me? I feared to ask the question, yet burned to do so.

"Are you my father?" cried I.

"Alas! no! I am not your father," said he. "Yet I am all the father you ever knew; and you were, and are, dear to me as my own son. Ah, my poor Mary!—she was a kind mother to you. Told she not the secret of your birth before she died?"

"No," was my answer. "I was too young and thoughtless at the time. I recollect she called me to her bedside often, and wept over me; but she only prayed, and blessed me. She sent one of her neighbours, who was very attentive, for the minister to come to her, saying she had something important to intrust him with; but, before he arrived, her mind began to wander, and she remained in that condition until her death, two days after. She had even forgot she had sent for the good man, who, after offering up a prayer, departed." I paused, for the old man wept bitterly while I spake. I did respect his feelings; but my own were too impetuous to be restrained. "Who was my father, since you are not?" cried I. "Is he alive? If you ever loved me, pause not a moment. Nay, I shall tear the secret from you." And I started up in my bed, sore as I was, and looked wildly at him, as he appeared to hesitate.

"Be composed, my dear John," said he. "It is a melancholy tale. I would more willingly spare your feelings than wound them by the relation; but it were cruel now to withhold it from you. You will have no cause to blush for your relatives. My own history is so deeply interwoven with that of your parents, that I cannot disentangle them, and therefore must give them, connected as they

are. It was upon the borders of the romantic Esk I first awoke to consciousness, in the hospitable house of your grandfather, to whom my father had been head servant for many years. I was within a few weeks of the same age as John, your father, his third son. I was his foster-brother and playfellow, unequal as was our rank. I loved him with more than a brother's love, and would have risked my life for him, had he been in danger. He was my young master; his comfort was all my duty and care; and swiftly the days and hours passed on, until the period arrived that he was to go to Edinburgh to attend the classes at the university, and whither I was to accompany him. We were both young and inexperienced. Your father was of a fearless, open, and generous temper; and his rank in life gave him access to the best society in the city. At one of the assemblies he became acquainted with a young lady, the orphan daughter of an officer who had fallen in the wars of Marlborough. She resided with two rich maiden aunts, upon whom she depended for her present support and future fortune. Their intimacy soon ripened, unfortunately, into love. As politics raged at this time with a force and bitterness that divided friends and relations, even the sacred mysteries of love were interrupted by the offerings to the stern genius of discord. Rose's aunts were stern Whigs, supporters of what were then styled by us the Hanoverian usurpers; and their only surviving brother was an officer high of rank in their armies; while your grandfather was faithful to his lawful king, and as true a Tory as ever lived or bled for the Stewarts. Neither your father nor myself had ever troubled ourselves about the rival factions; yet we were, as we had been bred, staunch adherents to the royal exiles; but Love is of no party, and we were both under his influence. From the cause I have mentioned, your father's visits were unacceptable at Rose's aunts; their interviews were stolen, and, of course, more sweet. She was at times

allowed to walk out for exercise, and to visit, but never unaccompanied by her maid, who had been her servant before her mother's death. She was a bar in my master's way; and, if he dared to converse with his beloved, she would have been kept entirely from his sight. To aid him in his interviews, I became acquainted with Mary, the servant, and was soon as deep in love as my master. Little did our young and joyous hearts dream of the bitter dregs that lay in the cup of pleasure we quaffed in the hours of romance, as we walked, or sat scarce in sight of each other, among the cliffs and sheltered valleys of Arthur Seat. Nothing but my love for your father could have blinded me to the folly he was guilty of, and the ruin that awaited his future prospects in life. As for myself, I could not be other than I was. Mary was of my own rank, born to toil, and with little to lose; while they had a fearful height to fall from, if they wedded without consent of friends. But when, alas! did ever youthful love calculate consequences aright, until the calculation is useless?

"Thus intoxicated with love, the time ran on with unheeded speed; yet my master was unremitting in his studies. He had, with the consent of his father, fixed upon the law as his profession, as the political opinions of the latter gave his son small chance of rising in the army. Rose and he had often exchanged vows of mutual constancy, until more fortunate times for their love should arrive. Your father had pictured to himself speedy success at the bar; and the first use he was to make of his fame was to claim your mother from her aunts; and if they refused, as, from the vain efforts he had made to gain their good graces, he had every reason to expect, to wed her without their consent, or one farthing of fortune. His father's consent he knew he could not hope for before the marriage; but his forgiveness afterwards he had no doubt of obtaining. Thus had he lulled himself into a pleasant dream of security, from

which he was soon awakened. It was in the beginning of the third session of college, that one of the two aunts was taken suddenly ill, and died in a few days, without making any will. Elizabeth, the younger sister, who had never been very kind to Rose, was now her sole protector; and she, sweet lady, was rendered very unhappy—a circumstance that gave great pain and uneasiness to your father, and was the cause of the imprudent step he took. Scarcely was the funeral over, when Mary her maid was discharged, as an unnecessary burden; and, with my master's consent, she and I were married. Aided by his bounty, I began housekeeping, still waiting upon him; and, meanwhile, our house was the scene of the meeting of the lovers. The penury and harshness of her aunt rendered the young lady's life miserable. Her secret was communicated to my wife, who again told my master. This precipitated the consummation of the long courtship. He prevailed upon his beloved to give her consent to a private marriage, that he might have the right to shelter her from suffering longer from her aunt's tyranny. They were privately married in my house, at the head of Mary King's Close.

"Your father had not yet passed as an advocate, and had no means of subsistence, save what he got from his father. It was imperative that his marriage should be kept secret from every one. Your mother resided with her aunt only until your father had furnished a small house, near the foot of our close, for his beloved wife—an achievement he could not get accomplished so quickly as he wished, without raising curiosity as to the cause of his repeated demands for money. Nearly four months passed on after the marriage, and your mother still resided with her aunt, who, since her sister's death, had become gay, and had many visiters—principally bachelors—all paying her court, old as she was, for the sake of her wealth; and several of them often paying more attention to the young wife than she

wished. Among the visitants was one, a great favourite with the aunt, a retired officer, of an abandoned turn, but connected with some of the oldest families in Scotland. He was well received in most companies, and welcomed for his wit and jovial manner. I recollect I was waiting your father's return from a tavern party, principally young lawyers, before I went to my own house for the night, when he came home much sooner than I had expected, greatly agitated, and in high anger. Alarmed at his unwonted manner, I, with all the humble freedom I could ever use with him, implored him to tell me what had occurred to disturb him so much. After he had become more calm, he told me that Captain Ogilvie had been of the party; that they had drunk pretty freely, and were giving toasts; that the captain pledged Rose, your mother, and spoke more lightly of her than he could endure to hear; and that a quarrel had ensued, and blows had been struck. He then desired me to see that his rapier was sharp and in order, as he was to meet the captain by five the next morning in the Duke's Walk. My anger against the vile traducer was as great as that of my master. I wished I could meet him in his place; for I had a strong feeling that evil would come out of it; but this was impossible.

"Your father sat down to his writing-table, and began two letters—one for his young wife, the other to his father—and, while he was thus employed, I ran home, told Mary not to expect me home that night, and put on a suit of plain clothes. Before he was done, I had his sword and my own in excellent order; for I was as good at fencing as he was, in consequence of having practised with him all the manly exercises he had learned. As soon as he was ready, we began play at the swords; as the captain was an expert swordsman, while my master had had no practice for several years. Thus we passed the night until past four o'clock. When we sallied forth, we called at Blackford's Wynd upon

his second, whom we found waiting upon him, and then proceeded by St Mary's Wynd Port and the South Back of the Canongate to the ground, which we reached a few minutes before the appointed time. The captain and his friend arrived almost as soon as we did. Since then, I have seen blood spilled as freely as water; but never did my heart quail as at this time. In fighting with the blood warm, there is a fierce pleasure; but to me nothing is, or can be, more distressing than to stand an idle spectator, and see your friend engaged, and hear the clash and rasp of the weapon aimed at his heart, as if it were your own, and your hands bound. Such were my feelings at this time. The seconds wished to reconcile them, but neither would hear of it. Each drew, and stood on his guard. A fearful pause of a few seconds ensued, while they eyed each other like hungry wolves. My eyes felt as if they would start from their sockets; my breath was suspended; all was still as death; a sudden clang rung on my ears; their swords gleamed in the rays of the rising sun; and so rapid were their movements, that my eye could not follow them. I saw that the captain, from his fence, was a complete master of his weapon, having practised abroad. My master had been foiled in his favourite assault—the one, indeed, on which I had placed my reliance. A moment's pause ensued; neither had drawn blood. Again they closed, and, after a few unsuccessful attacks, paused again for breath. I saw the blood upon my master's arm, from a slight cut. My hand grasped my sword; but, by a violent effort, I restrained myself. They had been engaged nearly half-an-hour; my master's hand was dyed in blood; but he was young and alert; while his antagonist was rather corpulent, and his constitution shaken by dissipation. His play became now more feeble and cautious, and my confidence began to revive. He was yet without a scratch; and, collecting all his energies, he made a desperate lunge, which

your father only parried so far as to make it pass between his side and the sword-arm, piercing his vest; and the captain lay at his feet transfixed. My heart leaped for joy as I ran to your father's aid. I bound up his arm, while the two seconds attended to the captain. I found my master but slightly hurt. He despatched me for aid to his antagonist, with which I returned; and, as the captain's wound appeared to be mortal, we left them, and proceeded over the hill. We scarcely exchanged words. Passing up the valley, we stood upon the crest of the height that commanded a view of Craigmillar Castle, and the distant hills, with the level country between. Here we paused; and your father, clasping his hands in agony, gazed around for a few minutes in silence. My own heart was too full to speak, and I stood looking upon his mental suffering, which I knew no mode of soothing, and reverenced too much to interrupt. At length he said, as if unconscious of my presence, 'Farewell, sweet scenes of my happiness! my cruel destiny drives me from you, and her who is dearer to me than life. But that thought is distraction. Rose! my beloved Rose! in what a state am I forced to leave you! Alas! I dare not even bid you farewell. My hands are red with blood, and the avengers will soon be on my track; but in defence of your honour it was shed, and Heaven will justify the act. Who now—who will protect you when I am an outlaw?'

"He dashed his hands upon his forehead, and groaned. I could endure in silence no longer, and at length soothed him into something like composure. It was agreed that he should go to his father, inform him of his duel, and act by his counsel; while I should return to my own house, watch the progress of the captain's wound, and, happen what would, meet him at Roslin Chapel at ten o'clock in the evening, to consult what was farther to be done. We parted at St Leonard's Hill.

"In the forenoon nothing was talked of in the city but Captain Ogilvie's duel; and it had become a party question. The Whigs had one version of the cause of quarrel, the Tories another I gave no ear to either; but was rejoiced to learn that the captain was not dead, although his life was despaired of.

"It was now past six o'clock—the quarter had chimed upon the clock of St Giles. I had my hand on the latch to go once more to the captain's, to know how he continued since my last inquiry, when the rasp was gently moved. I opened the door, and your mother staggered into my arms, pale as death, and swooned away. With difficulty Mary and I restored her to consciousness. I told her of your father's safety; and she replied that she was now, save for her husband, a destitute outcast; that her aunt, who only waited a pretext, had turned her out upon the world; and that the cause of her expulsion was her conduct in being the mean of her aunt's favourite, Captain Ogilvie's death. I told her that the captain was not yet dead, and would, I hoped, survive; and, leaving her in charge of Mary, I hurried to ascertain what ground there was for any hope. I found that the captain was still alive, but that his death was hourly expected.

"With a sorrowful heart I hurried out by Bristo Port, after getting the word for the night from the keeper, that I might be admitted, on my return, into the city. I was at the chapel some time before ten o'clock, and found my master waiting for me. When I told him that the captain was still in life, he took my hand—'Square,' he said, 'this has been a sad and dreary day to me. It is a fearful thing to have blood upon our hands, even in a just cause. I pray with my whole soul he may recover, both for his own sake and mine.'

"I then told him what had befallen your mother.

"'I am happy it is so,' he said. 'I shall leave her under

the keeping of Mary and you with more confidence than I could in her aunt's. My mind is relieved of a burden; my greatest difficulty was how to dispose of my beloved until my return; for, by the command of my father, I set off for France to-morrow—to St Germains, where I will remain until this untoward affair blows over. If all go as we anticipate, you will, perhaps, see me here sooner than you expect—ay, with a gallant band of patriots, to redress Scotland's wrongs, and restore our rightful prince. My father is not displeased at my conduct—would that he knew the right I had to take my Rose's part! But the time will come. As I know not how soon the officers of justice may be in quest of me, I must depart to-morrow morning for England, on my way to France. I must therefore see Rose, to bid her good-by for a short season. I shall be waiting for her near St Anthony's Chapel, to weep our parting, where we have so often smiled at our meetings. O William, William! these thoughts unman me.'

"'My dear master,' said I, 'am I to accompany you?'

"'No, William,' replied he—'no; I leave my beloved wife to your care until my return, when I will requite you as she shall report of you.'

"It was early in the morning before I reached Edinburgh. I found your mother and Mary still out of bed, awaiting my return. The night was spent in tears by the females, and a melancholy presentiment was on my own heart. Before we set out to meet the fugitive, I caused them to disguise themselves—your mother having my wife's maid, and she a dress she had never before worn. They proceeded down the street by themselves, while I went to inquire how the captain had spent the night. I found he was still in life, but no hopes were entertained of his recovery.

"The shades of evening were beginning to fall before this last and sorrowful parting terminated. They never met again. Your mother, who was in the family way, although

we knew not the fact for weeks afterwards, began to droop and pine—a sadness of heart seemed to consume her; in vain we strove to cheer her gloom; and her aunt made no inquiries after her. Once a-week I visited the banks of the Esk to inquire after my master; and occasionally got accounts of his welfare; but they were few and far between —only, indeed, when the letters could be forwarded by some one coming to Scotland. No letter had as yet come to me for his wife. How often have I left her, with a faint smile of hope dispelling the habitual sadness of her lovely countenance, and returned with an aching heart to witness her increased melancholy. Your father had left her all the gold he could, even more than he could spare; yet we would have given it all for a single letter from his hand; but none came. Meanwhile Captain Ogilvie, who continued long in a precarious state, ultimately recovered.

"At length you were born; but your unfortunate mother did not survive many days; and scarcely was the sod green on her grave, when my master came back to Scotland. His grief, his agony, I shall not attempt to describe. In a few weeks after he returned to France, for his native country was hateful to him; and I would have accompanied him, but that Mary was in delicate health, and I could not leave her. As his father was displeased at him for relinquishing his study of the law, he gave him only a small sum to maintain him in France. You passed, meanwhile, as my own child, and went under my name.

"At length the long-expected deliverer came. I concealed the certificate of your father's marriage, and some other papers, in the wainscot of our room, and would have joined my master in the north; but, as the party were in rapid advance to Edinburgh, I thought I could be of more service to the cause in Edinburgh. It was I who contrived the way, and caused the easy entry of the Prince into the city, by the Netherbow Port. The gentleman you saw once or

twice in conversation with Mary, whom you took for your mother, was your father; but it was not thought prudent to undeceive you. We had the greatest confidence in the success of our righteous cause. Alas! we were prosperous for a time, only to feel more bitterly our reverse. We advanced into England, elate with the victory of Tranent, where we scattered the red-coats like frightened deer. I had no opportunity of visiting Edinburgh again, until it would have been death to me to dare the act. Your father was wounded at the Battle of Falkirk, and required my utmost care. After the Prince retired from the siege of Stirling, and Cumberland's arrival in the north, our affairs began to wear a different aspect. Carlisle had been recaptured, and our success seemed farther from us than at the commencement. My master's wound was, by good management, so much better that he could travel by easy stages. The volunteers and adherents of the Hanoverians were beginning to show more bravery, by apprehending all whom they knew belonged to the Prince; so that, without taking leave, we left our landlord in the night; and, crossing at Kincardine, got into Fife, and travelled down the shores of the Forth until we reached Dysart, where your father was confined to bed, by fever, for some days. Here we received the heart-breaking intelligence of Culloden Field, and the massacre of the friends of royalty. Scotland was no longer a country for us. My master had acted too open and conspicuous a part to hope for pardon. I would, perhaps, on Mary's account and yours, have ventured my life in a return to Edinburgh; but I could not leave your father in his present situation. As yet no one suspected we had belonged to the Highland army; for I had so adroitly concealed my master's wound, that he was thought to be only sick of a fever. Fortunately, there was a vessel about to sail for Rotterdam. We embarked for Holland without interruption, and arrived safe. During your father's con-

valescence we were reduced to great straits; for our supply of cash was, when we left Scotland, much reduced, and here it entirely failed. My master had written to his brother for assistance; but he had found it for his advantage to change sides; and, so far from sending a remittance, he never answered one of his letters. Had it not been for the disinterested aid of a Scottish merchant, who was established in the place of our retreat, and who had been a college friend of your father, we must have been reduced to absolute want. Through his influence, he obtained for him a commission in the Scottish Brigade, then in the service of the States; and thus relieved him from the humiliation of dependence; but this was not accomplished until nearly the end of the second year after I had left my peaceful home. During all this time we were in the greatest anxiety—he about his son, I about my dear wife. Yet we had no means of ascertaining your fates; and the consciousness of the poverty you must be plunged in embittered all our thoughts. As soon as my master joined the division of the brigade, which was quartered in Bergen-op-Zoom, he borrowed a sum of money for my use. At all hazards I had resolved to return to Edinburgh, use all the precaution I could to avoid being recognised, and bring over with me to Holland you and my dear Mary.

"All being prepared, I bade adieu to your father, and embarked, in the dress of a Dutch skipper, on board of a vessel bound for Dysart, principally loaded with old iron, for the nailers of Pathhead. She was a Fife vessel; and the captain knew me only as William Speare, a Dutchman. Upon our arrival, I crossed, with the first Kinghorn boat, for Leith, and hurried up to Edinburgh. Our passage across the Frith had been very tedious; and the shades of evening were just coming on when I reached the Abbey Hill. With a heart equally divided between hope and fear, I walked up the Canongate, through the Netherbow Port,

and up the High Street. I saw many that I had known in happier days, and my heart yearned to address them; but, alas! I was a proscribed outlaw, shut out from the society I loved. When I reached Mary King's Close, my heart beat so ardently, that I was forced to pause for breath as I climbed the stair to my old door. I took the rasp in my hand, and gave my wonted tirl. A female opened the door, about the same height as her I loved. It was very dusky. That it was my wife I had no doubt. I threw my arms around her, crying, 'Dear Mary!' The female pushed me from her, and screamed out for help. I thought I would have sunk to the ground, and leaned against the door for support. An elderly female came in haste with a light. I attempted to speak, but could only sob, and felt sick almost to death. The women looked upon me in amazement, for the tears were silently stealing down my face. After whispering a few words, I was kindly invited into the house which I had expected to have been my own. It was tidily furnished; but everything in it was strange to me, and wore a look of desolation and loneliness. Neither my wife nor you were there. Not to betray myself, I told them that I had not been in Edinburgh for a long time; but that, when I left it last, a very dear friend had resided there, whom I had hoped to find where I left her, and that my mistake must plead my excuse for any apparent rudeness. Their answers to my inquiries crushed all my hopes. Mary was in her silent grave, and you had disappeared. Nothing now remained to me in Scotland that I cared for; and, after in vain offering a reward to any one who could give any information concerning you, and shedding a few tears over the grave of my wife, I returned to Holland with my sorrowful intelligence. Your father, quite sunk with your uncertain fate, fell into a lowness of spirits that preyed upon his health, and continually reflected upon himself as the cause of your mother's early death, and your destitution.

"As the monotony and dulness of garrison duty in a strongly-fortified town served to increase his melancholy, which threatened to merge into consumption, he, by the advice of his physician—that change of scene, and a warm climate, might remove all the bad symptoms he exhibited—exchanged into a regiment stationed in the Island of Ceylon, into which I also enlisted, that I might accompany him. There was, alas! no other individual on earth for whom I cared. Far from recovering on the voyage, its tedious dulness sunk him more and more into his habitual lowness of spirits; and, on our arrival on the island, he grew worse, and did not survive many months. I buried him at Trincomalee. Alas! how true is the saying, that 'all men know where they were born, but none where they shall lay their bones.'"

So intense had been the interest I felt in his narrative, that I scarcely moved, lest I should lose a word, or interrupt him. He paused at this event, and wiped a tear from his eyes. William and Mary I had until this hour looked upon as my real parents. For those I now heard of, I had new feelings to acquire. I noticed that he did not tell me the surname of my parents, and I pressed not the question. All that I asked of him was to continue his history, and inform me what had induced him once more to return to Scotland.

"Can a Scotsman ask that question of a Scotsman?" said he. "In whatever part of the globe he may be, the hope to lay his bones with his fathers is the Polar Star that cheers his wanderings, be they prosperous or adverse. Remove this hope, and his energies from that moment sink, for he has lost all of life worth caring for. I have both known and felt it. But to proceed:—

"After your father's death, I felt the most solitary of men for many months. Still I continued to do my duty as a private soldier, without taking any interest in surrounding

events. About two years after my arrival, a revolt broke out in the colony: the Singaleese were aided by the Candians from the mountains; and the handful of Europeans could scarce make head against the multitudes of the natives, who had courage and ferocity more than sufficient to have exterminated us every man; but, fortunately for us, they had no discipline or other mode of warfare, but to rush on their enemy and overpower them. This they found to be a vain attempt; yet they never changed their mode until compelled to sue for peace, by the immense slaughter made of them in this war of carnage and massacre. I had been several times the decided cause of victory to the Dutch, in preventing small detachments from being cut off, and directing the movements of the main body; for which services I was promoted to a lieutenantcy. I never rose higher, nor do I believe I would have attained this rank, had it not been to enable me to take command of small parties, for which I was qualified from my being ever on the outskirts of the army, or in the borders of the jungle. Great numbers of my men died through fatigue and fever. I, myself, for several years, remained robust; but my turn came at length. I fevered and relapsed; several times my life was despaired of for whole weeks; and many wounds I had received from the Candian spears and arrows broke out afresh, and baffled the power of medicine. My constitution triumphed over my malady; but I was unfit for service. I have one wound here on my side that is hurrying me to my grave; which, I hope, will be in Pennycuick churchyard. But, now that I have the happiness to find my long-lost charge, there is one more duty for me to perform when we reach Edinburgh, whither you must return with me, to consign me to the dust. That duty I never did expect to be called to perform—it is to re-possess myself of the certificates of your father's marriage and your baptism, which are, as I told you, concealed behind the wainscot in

the house in Mary King's Close. I trust, for your sake, they are still safe, and may be the means of placing you in your proper rank in society."

"Dear father," I replied—"for I must still call you so—if it is to be of any service to me alone, it is of no avail to proceed further on that errand, for fortune baffles all my undertakings, and I tell you you will not succeed; still I have no objection to return with you to Scotland, although my present object in London was to go to sea in a vessel bound for the Indian seas—the only place of all I ever visited where fortune smiled upon me, and I scorned her favours."

After dinner I gave the lieutenant an outline of my adventures since he had left Edinburgh, at which he was much moved. When I told him of the obligation I lay under to the worthy lawyer—

"Ah, Johnnie!" said he, "we have already half-gained the victory. Mr Davidson was at college and intimate with your father, and he knows me well as your father's servant. Scotland does not contain a better man for our purpose. I shall fee him liberally, and fortune may yet smile upon us." It was now late in the evening, and the lieutenant left me for the night.

Scarce was he gone, when a new passion took entire possession of me—that of pride and ambition. I felt myself quite changed, and strange visions of imaginary importance floated before me. My present finances were now deemed low enough—eleven guineas—which at one period I would have considered an immense sum. So sanguine had a few hours made me, that I looked upon it only as so many pence. From this period I date a complete revolution in my train of thoughts. Formerly I had cared but for the passing hour, nor heeded for to-morrow. My early education had, until now, clung to me in all my vicissitudes, being ever the outcast orphan boy, who, his belly full, his back warm, had

nothing further to obtain. My contentment was now gone. But to proceed:—

For a few days I was forced to keep at home, until the marks of my Tower Hill affray had disappeared; during which, urged by my new passion (pride), I got myself equipped in the extreme of fashion. I now smile at my folly, when I look back to these few weeks in which I was swayed by it. But no young lady, getting her first ball-dress, was ever more fidgety or hard to please than John Square. The lieutenant was pleased to see me ape the gentleman; for he really looked upon me as such, and paid me every deference, as the son of his master. The money he had saved while in Ceylon he counted as mutual; nor would he allow me to expend one farthing of my own. We both were now anxious to proceed to Edinburgh, and embarked in the first trader bound for Leith. This voyage was the most pleasant I had ever made; I was in fairyland, and the lieutenant not far behind me.

When we were landed, with the earliest convenience we proceeded to Edinburgh, with far different feelings from any I had before experienced. Having arrived in the evening, it was next morning, after an early breakfast, that we proceeded from our inn in the Canongate towards the Cross, to reconnoitre the old domicile of William Square, the house in which I had first drawn breath. You may judge our horror, surprise, and grief—I cannot describe it—that loved edifice had disappeared from the earth; it no longer existed. Where it had once stood, new walls were shooting up towards the firmament. It and many others had been swept away, to make room for the site of the present Royal Exchange. A feeling of desolation, bordering on despair, took possession of my heart. The lieutenant, uttering a groan, wrung his hands, and looked upon me with a gaze that pierced me to the soul. I felt his frame leaning upon me with the weight of death. He would have sunk to the

ground, had I not supported him. With difficulty I conveyed him into Corbet's tavern, under the Piazzas, where, after a time, he recovered, only to give vent to a burst of anguish.

"Ill-fated parent and ill-fated child!" he cried, "it was not that my heart yearned not to tell you the family from whence you sprung, but a presentiment hung heavy upon my mind that there was evil still in store for you. Alas, my poor John! are you really doomed to dree the weird assigned your forebears. Your father's father was Mr William —— of ——. Can it be possible that these canting Whigamores have the spirit of prophecy? This almost forces me to think they had—

'For saints' blood and saints harried,
The third generation will ne'er inherit.'

It is too true, too true!"

These last sentences he repeated to himself several times as if unconsciously, and again sunk back upon his chair in a state of stupor; nor could I rouse him by all the gentle methods I could use. At length I called a sedan-chair, and had him conveyed to the inn, and put to bed. He seemed quite unconscious and passive, until, disturbed by our moving him into bed, when, as if mechanically, he again said—

"'For saints' blood and saints harried,
The third generation will ne'er inherit.'

My poor boy! my poor boy!"

At this time a physician arrived, and, having administered the remedies he thought most efficacious in my foster-parent's case, was about to retire, when I inquired if he thought there was any immediate danger. He candidly said he thought there was; for the patient's constitution was much reduced, and he had received some violent shock, which might dash out the remaining drops from the nearly exhausted glass. He advised that he should not be left

alone for any time; and, above all, that he must be kept quiet, until he called again in the afternoon.

As soon as I had recovered myself a little from the agitation this untoward event had produced, I wrote a note to Mr Davidson, requesting he would be so kind as call upon me as soon as convenient, stating that I had urgent business to consult him upon, and pleading, as my excuse for putting him to the trouble, the sudden illness of a friend. When the cadie was sent off with my card, I began to ruminate upon my prospects, which again had been so suddenly overcast. He on whom my sole dependence was placed lay in the room where I sat, in a state of prostration bordering almost upon unconsciousness. The visions of pride and consequence in which I had indulged, from the time I first heard of my gentle forefathers, began to fade from before me; a short time of sad and melancholy reasoning on probabilities had swept them away as completely as the innovating hands of the good citizens had removed the old tenement in which the testimonials of their reality had been concealed. In the midst of these reflections, the lawyer arrived. His astonishment at seeing me was equalled by my joy at meeting with one in whose judgment and shrewdness I had the utmost confidence. The sight of him renewed my hopes; and the fond clinging to self-importance, so natural, yet so foolish, when it is derived from no merit or endeavour of the individual, again returned upon me.

After mutual congratulations, we at once proceeded to business. After stating my arrival in London, and strange meeting with the lieutenant, I narrated the melancholy fate of my parents. He heard me to the end with all the imperturbability of a man of business; yet his countenance betrayed the interest he took in my recital. When I concluded, he rose to his feet; and, placing his hands behind his back, moved quickly two or three times across the room, then stopped at the side of the bed where the lieu-

tenant lay; and, after gazing for a short time upon his altered countenance, turned to me, and gave his head an ominous shake.

"Mr Square," said he, "this is a strange business. I myself have not a doubt of the truth of all the circumstances, some of which I have a distinct recollection of—more especially the quarrel and duel; but how to obtain the necessary evidence I at present cannot divine. The loss of the papers is a very material point; and the sudden illness of your foster-parent is very unfortunate. But there is also another difficulty, even were we so fortunate, as I hope we will be, as to restore him to health and consciousness: his testimony could not be taken in any court of justice; he is an outlaw, tainted by actual rebellion, and liable to be apprehended and executed as a traitor. His mildest punishment, if not pardoned after sentence, would be banishment; and, what is not the least worthy of serious consideration, the object to be attained, unless your friend is very rich, may not be worth the expense and trouble. That foolish rhyme has been fulfilled, in the meantime, so far. Your great-grandfather was a zealous partisan of the Lauderdale administration in Scotland; and, I believe, rather rigorous with the adherents of the Covenant. At the Revolution, he fell into disgrace with the powers that assumed the reins of government, and so turned his hopes upon the restoration of the exiled family, and impoverished himself in aiding the intrigues to restore them. Your grandfather had been bred in, and adhered to, the same politics, now a losing game. He still farther reduced the rent-roll by sales and bonds; and, at his death, your two uncles, who remained at home, changed their party. The older died young, without having married; and the younger succeeded to what remained of the estate of his ancestors—a mere wreck, soon spent in dissipation. Not one furr of land that once owned your ancestors as

lord now owns their sway. With the sum produced by the last sale, your uncle bade adieu to Scotland; and you are the last of the race. I would advise no farther proceedings than to endeavour, if possible, to recover the documents relating to your birth and legitimacy, if they have not been destroyed in pulling down the old walls."

Why should I dwell on my disappointment. Mr Davidson used every effort, by inquiries and offers of reward; but the papers never were recovered, although we got from one of the workmen the brass Dutch box in which they had been placed. He had purchased it from one of the labourers who picked it up in the ruins, and had destroyed the papers as of no importance. I had now the knowledge of the family from whom I was descended, but no proof to establish my claim, even though my right to property to any amount would have been the consequence.

As for my foster-parent, he gradually recovered from the stupor that had overwhelmed him, but never regained his wonted energies. He was possessed of a few hundred pounds, besides his half-pay from the Dutch Government, which was regularly paid. He never could endure me for any length of time out of his sight; and I remained with him until his death, a few years afterwards. I knew that I was wasting my time; yet I could not desert the old man, whose whole happiness was concentrated in me; and, shall I confess, I felt a strange happiness in his society—for he alone of all mankind treated the beggar-boy of former years as an individual of rank; and our conversation was generally about the traditions of my ancestors. When the weather would permit, it was our wont to leave our house at Clock Mill, to wander over the scenes he loved—the spots in and around the bosom of Arthur Seat, where he had first won the affections of his departed Mary—and point out the favourite haunts which my father and mother used to sit in or walk.

On these we would gaze, until our imagination seemed vested with the power of calling the personages before us. Thus passed on the time until the lieutenant's death, which happened suddenly.

I was thus once more alone in the world, without a tie to bind me to it, save the natural love of life inherent in man. In Edinburgh I had formed no acquaintance; a continual soreness haunted me as to the dignity of birth, yet I never assumed even the name of my parent. I only heard it pronounced by my foster-father, who urged me to adopt my family honours. The conversation of the lieutenant had given my mind a military bias. I was weary of Edinburgh, which recalled to my mind too many sad reflections; and I mentioned to Mr Davidson the resolution I had formed. After winding up the affairs of the lieutenant, I found that I was possessed of one hundred and seventy pounds. Mr Davidson, who still insisted that the money I had left as a gift in his hands was at my disposal, generously offered to advance the amount required to purchase me an ensigney; but this I would on no account allow. My pride revolted at a pecuniary obligation, as a derogation from my family dignity, which still hung heavy upon me. By his advice, and through his assistance, I sunk in the hands of the magistrates one hundred and fifty pounds, as the most profitable way I could invest it—the interest to accumulate until my return in person to claim it. It was about the year 1775, when the troubles in America had commenced. Accounts had just arrived that blood had been shed at Lexington and Concord; and the bootless victory at Boston was announced, but not confirmed. It was the month of August, and the utmost excitement reigned among the people in the city: every means, both legal and scarcely legal, being employed to raise troops. The comprehending act was passed, by which the justices of the peace were empowered to impress and send to the army all idle or immoral characters: an en-

gine of great tyranny and oppression in their hands; for every person who was in the least obnoxious to them was hurried to the army, whatever his character might be. Without informing my friend Mr Davidson, I bade him farewell, and proceeded to Glasgow, where I entered as a private into the Fraser Highlanders, resolved to carve out my own fortune with my sword. This I did through my foolish pride, so little had I learned by my former experience. During my short stay with the party, before I joined the regiment, my mind became disgusted by the modes I saw practised to augment the army, by trepanning and actual violence. The landed gentlemen and magistrates appeared to have lost, in their zeal, every sense of justice. The most disgusting modes were resorted to: such as putting a shilling into a drinking jug, and causing the king's health to be pledged; while the soldier, in plain clothes, sitting in company as a tradesman, or a person from the country, was ready to seize the person whom he had pitched upon, the moment he drank the royal toast. If he resisted, nothing could save him from prison; enlist, and attest he must. So prevalent, indeed, was this mode, that the publicans were under the necessity of getting pewter jugs with glass bottoms to drink from, or their houses would have been deserted. This gave security to the customer that there was not a shilling in the bottom; and allowed him to watch through the glass the motions of the persons with whom he drank. The only redress the kidnapped individual got was, that he might choose the regiment he would join; and he in general fixed upon some other one than the one to which his betrayer belonged. One instance disgusted me beyond endurance. It happened to a good-looking young lad, belonging to Hamilton. An intimate acquaintance of his had been enlisted, whether voluntarily or not I do not recollect, but he was still without any marks of his new profession. Several of the old soldiers were also with him,

prowling about for recruits, when he recognised his former friend in the Briggate, accompanied by his intended bride and their mothers, who had come to Glasgow with the young people to purchase their plenishing. Rejoiced to meet an old acquaintance in the city, the party, being fatigued with their walk and the heat of the weather, retired to a neighbouring public-house to rest and refresh themselves. The companions of the betrayer, to avoid suspicion, had passed on, as if they were not of his party, but entered the house a short time after. As those from the country had business to transact, they refused to tarry, and the new-made soldier insisted to pay for the entertainment, which, after a good-natured dispute, he was allowed to do. By design, or otherwise, he sat at the far end of the table, and when the landlady was called, he said, handing forward a shilling—

"Here, George, is a shilling; be so good as hand it to the landlady."

"The reckoning is one and sixpence," said she.

"Oh, I have plenty of the king's coin. Here is another for you, George."

To the alarm and grief of the bridal party, when they were at the door to proceed on the business they had come to town upon, the soldiers in waiting seized the young man, and declared him one of the king's men. The betrayer shrunk back, not yet hardened to the trade; but his associates compelled the victim to go with them to the jail. Fortunately for them and the young man, they had respectable friends in the city, who waited upon some of the magistrates. An investigation took place. The soldiers scrupled not to maintain that he was enlisted, and were willing to swear that he had taken the second shilling in the king's name—the usual words of voluntary enlistment. They even produced the landlady, who, either leaning towards the soldiers (her good customers), or not paying much attention at the time, declared that she heard, when the se-

cond shilling was given, distinctly the words "king and coin." So powerful was the feeling at this time, that he was declared duly enlisted, and only escaped by paying to the party a round sum of smart-money.

After passing the winter at drill, I was embarked with a numerous body, to reinforce the army besieged in Quebec, where we arrived in the month of May. I was now on the field where I was to reap the fruits of my ambition; but I found it unpromising, and strewed with thorns. Still I had an object to attain, however distant it might be, and my oppression left me. I was most assiduous in my duties, and was soon made a corporal. My heart leaped for joy. This was the first step to my ambition; my hopes began to brighten, and I submitted to our privations without a murmur. At the storming of St John's, I was made a serjeant; and here I stuck. In vain was all my daring and good conduct. At the descent upon Long Island, I was as conspicuous as I dared to be by the rules of strict discipline, and, in consequence, often had the charge of small picquets upon dangerous service, and was twice slightly wounded. Once I led the company, and took several prisoners, after both the captain and ensign were carried to the rear dangerously wounded. The ensign died in a few days of his wound; and it was generally believed by the men of the regiment that I would have been promoted to his rank. At length, in the month of August, 1781, I was made paymaster-serjeant; which rank I did not long retain; for the army was not long after completely surrounded by the Americans, besieged in Yorktown and at Gloucester, and, after suffering the extreme of hardships for twelve days, from sickness, famine, and the fire of the enemy, Lord Cornwallis, hopeless of being relieved, surrendered himself and army prisoners of war. This put an extinguisher upon all my hopes. I was now a prisoner, sick, and looked upon for death, and must have perished had it not been for one

of the captains of the American army, to whom the sick prisoners were delivered over. He proved to have been one of the palantines—an Aberdeen lad—who had been my companion in early misfortune, now an extensive proprietor in New England. To him I was indebted for much kindness during my imprisonment until the peace. When I returned to Britain, I was discharged with a pension of one shilling per day, being what is called the king's letter, which, with the accumulation of my annuity, enables me to finish my chequered career in competence, and wander as I list amidst these scenes of wo and pleasure, lovely by nature, and endeared by former recollections.'

THE BEWILDERED STUDENT.*

FIFTY years ago, the roads in many parts of Scotland were so bad that they could only be travelled on with safety in broad daylight. The dangers which the tourist had to encounter did not arise from the lawless dispositions of the people; for Scotland was then a highly moral and highly hospitable country. But, ere the genius of road-making had visited it, the benighted wanderer had more reason to apprehend destruction from the delusive light of the "moss-traversing spunkie," than from the sudden flash of the robber's pistol. Vast undrained marshes were common in every part of the country. From these marshes many a goodly peat-stack had been delved, and the holes were soon filled up with stagnant water—covered with zoophytes and other aquatic plants, and surrounded by tall rushes, which concealed from the eye those dangerous pits, where a whole regiment of soldiers might have found an inglorious grave.

The roads, in many places, passed so close to these unwholesome bogs, that a false step in the dark was often equal to stepping out of this world. Nor was this the only risk that a traveller had to calculate upon, when settling the propriety of making his will before he undertook a journey; for the highways—properly so called, at that period—frequently ascended in the most abrupt manner from the swampy valley to the rocky hillside, where they winded along the edges of precipices, which afforded admirable facilities for despairing lovers to take the *loup* without being suspected of suicide.

* The author of this tale, John Bethune, was one of the two brothers, self-educated labourers, referred to in the Editor's note appended to "The Young Laird."—ED.

Besides the actual danger which attended travelling in those days, there were many inconveniences, which, though less appalling, were even more perplexing to a forward spirit, than the risk of tumbling from a rock-head, or plunging into a peat-bog. The roads in many places branched out in different directions upon lonely muirs, where no information could be obtained concerning the places to which they led; and the consequence was, that many a weary wight, after cogitating half-an-hour upon the propriety of turning to the right hand or the left, dashed into one of the doubtful paths, and proceeded for another hour at his utmost speed, to no better purpose than simply to receive information that he had walked four miles out of his way. Inns, too, were almost unknown, except in the towns and upon the most frequented roads; and even there the accommodation was so meagre, that equestrians had often the greatest difficulty in finding lodgings for themselves and horses. Steam-waggons and stage-coaches, as yet, lay packed up in the heads of their inventors; and the traveller, though otherwise in comfortable circumstances, had no other means of conveyance but his own two legs, and an oaken or hazel staff, with which he urged them onward when ascending, and prevented them running away with him when descending the hill-side. Thus equipped, he could find lodgings in the first cottage which he came to; and, if his mind was not too refined for the conversation of simple, social, warm-hearted men, nor his taste too delicate for the "halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food," he could generally pass the night with tolerable comfort, and very little expense. In this way, many of the most eminent men of the time became acquainted with the humble homes and virtuous habits of the peasantry of their native land; and the information which they thus acquired formed a link of connection between the different classes of society, which the prejudices of fashion could never afterwards wholly destroy.

But we have a simple story to narrate, which will sufficiently illustrate the kindly hospitality which characterised the poorest of our rural population, and the generous feeling with which the greatest could remember and requite the little services which inclination *induced*, or necessity *forced*, them to accept.

Upon the banks of one of the most beautiful little lakes which is to be found in the Lowlands of Scotland, and not far from the ancient and now half-forgotten village of Lindores, stand four humble cottages, which are still the abodes of men; though, to the eyes of a modern traveller, their low walls and moss-covered roofs would present the idea of sheep-cots or cattle-sheds, rather than that of human habitations. The fields around them are now in the highest state of cultivation; and the gentle hills with which they are on all sides surrounded, where inaccessible to the plough, are, for the most part, covered with thriving plantations, which give a sheltered and picturesque appearance to the little world in which they are situated. These simple shielings seem to have outlasted many of their humble contemporaries, the sites of which are now only indicated by two or three decaying trees, which, in the greenness of youth, must have beautified the little gardens of sober old men, who are long ago in their graves, and shaded the sports of children, who are now, perhaps, tottering with bleached locks through the crowded streets of some smoky town, forgetful alike of the quiet fields upon which they danced away the innocent morning of existence, and the spreading trees beneath whose branches they had imitated the voice of the cuckoo, and listened to the song of birds, with spirits as light and musical as their own.

About fifty years ago, one of these cottages was occupied by James W—— and his wife, a most respectable and industrious pair, whose humble virtues are still remembered with esteem by the elderly part of the community in the

neighbourhood where they lived. James was a weaver, and, like most of his craft at that time, he manufactured his own yarn, and sold his own cloth. But, besides this little business, which he carried on for himself, he was often employed by the country people in what was called customer work. He also farmed a small piece of ground, which afforded him a healthful occupation in the spring months, and supported a cow, whose produce, to use his own language, "keepit a fu' house a' the year round."

James was rather an intelligent man for his station. Besides being deeply versed in all that Biblical knowledge which was then so happily cultivated by the labouring class in Scotland, he had read Josephus and some other old historians, whose writings he quoted with so much promptness and propriety, that many of his simple listeners believed him to be almost inspired, and some of them went even so far as to say that his speech wanted only a little polishing to make him a match for the minister. But, though James really possessed a greater amount of knowledge than most of those with whom he mingled, he never exhibited that arrogant, overbearing manner, which is too often allied to superior abilities. His good-nature was equal to his other acquirements, and he was a special favourite with all who knew him. He could explain an abstruse doctrine to the satisfaction of the old gudemen, and enlarge with great animation on the merits of good housewifery, not forgetting, in the course of discussion, to pay a delicate compliment to the thrifty dames who intrusted him with the manufacturing of their linen. Nor was he less admired by the younger part of the community; for, while the old and sober asserted that James was a *canny* man, and a learned man, the young and frolicsome assured one another that he was a droll man, and a funny man. On the harvest field he was the very "soul of all;" for he never wanted a queer story or a witty jest, to cheer the spirits of his fellow-labourers, when they

began to flag under the heat and toil of the day. His wit, however, was of that quiet, inoffensive kind, which delights those who listen, without wounding the feelings of those upon whom it is exercised. He possessed a happy turn, too, for settling the disputes which frequently arose among the young and fiery spirits composing the little army of reapers with whom he was engaged. When a competition, or *campe*, as it was called, occurred, James's mediation was often necessary to reconcile the contending parties to the results of the contest; and his talent was seldom exerted in vain. While the pride of the vanquished brought forth charges of unfair play to cover the shame of defeat, and while these charges were repelled by the boasting of the victors, James stepped forward with some humorous remark, or displayed some piece of ludicrous mimicry, which overpowered the spirit of contention, and united both parties in a harmonious roar of laughter. He was not only umpire in their quarrels, and master of the ceremonies at their feasts, but chaplain in ordinary at their common breakfasts and dinners among the stooks. Upon these occasions, it was pleasing to remark the solemnity which prevailed in the usually noisy assembly, when James took off his old dimpled hat, and, with a devotional gravity, which contrasted finely with the cheerful expression of his ordinary countenance, solicited the blessing of God upon the simple repast of which they were about to partake. If at any time the sly winks of some mischievous wag succeeded in raising a titter among the younger part of the company, it was suppressed in a moment; for, though James was extremely good-natured, he was always severe in rebuking the conduct of those who showed the least disrespect to religion.

Having thus given a general account of James's character, we must now proceed to narrate a simple anecdote in his life, which we consider worthy of being known, not only on account of the generosity of feeling which it exhibits, but

also on account of the opportunity which it affords for displaying the genuine simplicity of manners prevailing among the class to which he belonged at the period when it occurred.

One fine afternoon, in the beginning of the winter of 1776, as James was busily employed at his occupation in the shop, Nanny, his wife, entered with a handful of pirns, and a countenance which betokened something of importance. She was evidently in a hurry, and needed her husband's assistance; but hesitated about the propriety of asking it.

"When Jamie's aff the loom," said she to herself, "neither beam-traddles nor bore-staff 'll budge a single bit; and, if he fa's in wi' onybody by the gate, wha kens when he may come back again?—for the greatest faut that oor Jamie has, is just that he likes a crack owre weel."

Notwithstanding of these prudential considerations, Nanny did broach the subject in a most becoming and delicate manner, by asking her husband's advice in her present perplexity.

"What are we to do noo, Jamie?" said she, in a rather depressed tone. "There's no a pickle meal i' the barrel; and I hae the cow's supper to get in, and the butter to mak, and the bed to mak, and the milk to 'earn, forby mony a ither thing that *maun* be done—sae, ye see, I hae nae time to gang for meal the nicht."

"Hout, lassie!" said James, with a smile; "I'll tell ye what we'll do. I'll just get a pock, and set up by to Sandy Laing's for a peck or twa to keep oor teeth gaun till oor ain melder come frae the mill."

"Weel, aweel, Jamie," said the guidwife, glad to find such a ready remedy for all her difficulties. "If ye'll bring the meal, I'll mak the parritch, lad; but it wad hae been a braw thing if we had haen a bit cratur o' oor ain to gang an errant like this, and we micht hae been makin something at oor wark i' the time."

"It's very true, lassie," said James; "but, if we hae nae bairn to carry meal, we hae nane to eat it—let's aye be content, woman."

James was soon provided with a clean linen bag, which he deposited in his pocket; and, crossing his arms upon his back, he set off to the neighbouring village of Lindores for the necessary supply of meal. As he was proceeding along the ridge of a natural embankment, which forms the north-eastern boundary of the loch, he saw a well-dressed young man advancing towards him. The stranger seemed to be in a hurry—at least one might have supposed so from the rapidity of his motion; but he occasionally stopped and looked down upon the frozen lake, which expanded to the sky like a mighty mirror for the passing clouds to behold their own shadows in. After gazing for a few minutes, as if he had forgotten the length of his journey in contemplating the beauty of the prospect which extended beneath him, he would start off at a quicker pace, as if anxious to redeem the time which he had lost in gratifying an idle curiosity. When he drew near, James could easily discover, from his superior dress, slender make, and pale, meditative countenance, that he did not belong to that class "who drudge through wet and dry with never-ceasing toil;" and, notwithstanding of his itch for conversation, he would have passed the stranger without making any remark upon the state of the weather, the beauty of the scenery, or the antiquities of the parish. But the young man, who seemed to be as inquisitive as James was communicative, addressed him in a tone of frank cordiality, which at once removed every feeling of reserve.

After a few questions had been asked and answered, James, recollecting his errand, pulled out the bag which he had received from his wife, and, exhibiting it to his new-found acquaintance, remarked—

"I'm just gaun doon by to Sandy Laing's here, to get

twa pecks o' meal; and gin ye'll stap at leisure for a wee, I'll gae doon the hill wi' ye, and point oot a' the curiosities o' the place by the gate."

The stranger agreed to this proposal, and James marched off with most ungentlemanly strides to the merchant's, from which he returned in an incredibly short time, with his meal on his back, his hat in his hand, and his body bent forward several degrees beyond its usual perpendicular position.

"Ugh!" said James, as he again came up with the stranger, "I'm clean oot o' breath wi' my hurry; but an auld body's blast's sune blawn, and that's a stiff brae to climb wi' a burden; but mine's no a heavy ane."

"Permit me to carry it a bit till you recover yourself," said the stranger, taking hold of the bag.

"Na, na, sir," said James, laughing. "I'm muckle obliged—greatly obliged, sir; but ye dinna ken the penalty o' carryin a pock o' meal yet. Only look at my back, and think hoo sic a melvyin wad suit on your fine black coat. It wad mak ye look like a miller athegither; and the ladies, whan they saw ye neist, wadna ken that it was just yersel again. But I'll gather wund in a wee; and, i' the meantime, as I promised to gie ye an account o' the curiosities o' the place, I'll just begin wi' the nearest first; and, I assure ye, if onything short o' real richteousness can hallow the dust o' the earth, we noo stand on hallowed ground. This very spot where we noo breathe bears the name o' M'Duff's Hill; and thae auld stumps o' wa's, that ye see lookin oot amang the grass there, are the remains o' what was ance a castle or a palace belangin to the Thanes o' Fife. It wad be a very *unpregnable* place afore the invention o' gunpowther; for ye'll observe that it has Lindores Loch on the south, the Dog Loch on the wast, the Boistart Loch on the north, and the Childert Loch on the east; and there's nae doot but they wad hae ditches atween, to prevent their

enemies frae gettin in upon them by surprise. I could tell ye some fine stories about the sieges and battles that hae happened here; but, as it wad tak owre muckle o' yer time, I shall just mention hoo the lochs cam to get their names. About Lindores Loch I need say naething. A'body kens that it's just ca'ed after the little towny there, that stands on the north side o't. But the Dog Loch's rather a darker subject. It's supposed to hae derived its name frae the purpose it was devoted to. In auld times, ilka great chief had twa or three packs o' hounds, for huntin boars, and deers, and men wi'; and it's believed that the dogs frae the castle were aye driven to that loch to drink, when the chase was done; and the auld anes, that were owre sair bursten to rin again, were thrown into the middle o't, wi' stanes about their necks, to droon. Sae, ye see, frae this circumstance it got the name o' the Dog Loch. The Boistart Loch, again, as ye'll observe, lies atween twa hills; and when the wind blaws frae the east or the wast, it gathers into great gusts i' the glen, and maks the water jaw, and jawp, and foam like a caldron; and for this reason it has been ca'ed Boistart, or Boisterous, Loch. But there's a better story than this connected wi' the name o' the Childert Loch; and I aye like to tell't, on account o' the generosity that it displays, and the honour that it reflects upon oor country-women, wha, even in the maist savage times, werena athegither without some gliffins o' natural affection. It was the custom, it seems, in thae rude ages, for the leddies to engage in oot-door sports as weel as the men; and a very common amusement hereabout, wi' mothers and nurses o' a' descriptions, was the drawin o' their bairns, in a sort o' boxes or cradles, upon the smooth ice o' the loch. This diverted the women folk, and exercised the little anes, wha were thus prepared for the hardships o' the wild life that they afterwards led. Aweel, ae fine winter afternoon, as ane o' the bairns' maids frae the castle was pu'in a young Macduff, in

a braw silver-mounted cradle, upon the loch, and his mother lookin at them frae the hill here—maybe frae the very place where we noo stand—the ice brak, and doon gaed the cradle, bairn and a', to the bottom o' the loch. The puir lassie, wha stood upon a stronger part o' the ice, and still had the broken leadin-strings in her hand, heard the screams o' the distracted mother, and saw the muddy water risin owre the head o' the helpless wean; and, castin a confused look around, to see if ony assistance was at hand, she plunged into the same hole; and, in tryin to save the bairn, lost hersel. The watchman on the castle-tower heard the screams o' the leddy, and saw the melancholy accident; and ae tout o' his horn sent a hunder hardy callants to the place; but they were owre late. The bairn and his nurse were pu'ed oot o' the loch clasped in ane anither's arms; but the life had gaen oot o' them baith. It's said, however, that the body o' the bit lassie wha had perished in tryin to save that young sprout o' nobility received a' the honour that the gratitude o' its high-minded parents could confer. The last act o' her life was noble, and she was buried in the same grave wi' the son o' Macduff. But, noo that I've recovered my breath, we'll be joggin awa, if ye like; for ye'll be clean wearied oot wi' waitin upon an auld man's havers."

"I assure you I am not," said the stranger. "I have been much delighted with your recital; and I shall never think that time lost which is spent listening to such interesting anecdotes. But, pray, what is the name of that old, grey-roofed house upon the bank, at the western extremity of the loch?"

"Ou, that's just oor auld kirk," said James; "and a very venerable biggin it is, too. It was ance a Roman Catholic chapel; but the altar and the images hae been a' demolished; and the only vestige o' superstition that remains noo is the cross upon the riggin, and the jugs, and a stane

basin for the holy water, in the porch. But that's a fine, solemn situation, ye'll alloo, for a kirk; and that's a bonny burying-ground around it, too. It's just a pleasure to puir bodies like me to think that they hae a claim to sic a quiet inheritance, when a' the toils and troubles o' life are past."

"'Tis indeed a sweetly-retired spot," said the stranger; "and it wants only that 'cheerless, unsocial plant,' the sepulchral yew, to make it accord exactly to the description given by Gray in these beautiful lines of the Elegy—

> 'Beneath these rugged elms—that yew-tree's shade,
> Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
> Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
> The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.'"

"The description agrees unco weel, sir," said James; "for mony a sober Christian and mony a royit callant lie thegither below yon grassy divot, withoot bein sensible o' the company they keep. But, noo that we're speakin o' kirks, gin y'll just turn a wee bit to the richt wi' me, I'll let ye see a kirk construckit by the hands o' the *Creawtor* himsel; and, I'm sure, he has been mony a time as devootly worshipped there as ever he was in temples built by human hands."

The distance was but a few steps out of the way; and, as the stranger was enthusiastic in his desire to see every curiosity, he readily agreed to accompany James to the place. They accordingly turned into a narrow footpath, which diverged to the right, and winded among the gorse in a more southerly direction. The lake, which had been for some time concealed by a shoulder of the hill, again appeared; and the hill itself, divided into two ridges—forming a capacious amphitheatre, covered by smooth grass, and surrounded on all sides by tall broom and impenetrable furze. At the head or northern end of this dingle, the ground rises into a mound of considerable height and regu-

larity of form; and from this mound the prospect in all directions is unobstructed and extensive.

"There," said James, "is the kirk o' the Covenanters; and mony a guid sermon has been preached there, in defiance o' the winter's cauld and the summer's heat, and the persecution o' cruel men, that was waur to bide than them baith. In that howe stood the minister, upon a muckle stane that has been lang syne removed; and the congregation sat upon the brae around him. The sentry stood upon this knowe here, at yer richt hand; and it still bears the name o' the Watchman's Tower. His business, as ye'll maybe ken, was to watch for the appearance o' an enemy, and gie warnin to the preacher and his hearers to provide for their safety, by standin to their arms or takin to their heels. Mony a time I picture to mysel the confusion that wad tak place amang the women folk, when a party o' wild dragoons were seen scamperin in this direction. I think I hear the watchman fire his gun, as he rins to the congregation; I think I see the minister faulding up the Word o' God, and descendin to his audience wi' the composed dignity o' ane that has settled his account wi' time, and is prepared to dee for the doctrines he has advanced; then there is the animatin address that he delivers to his little flock, as they gather around him, wi' their swords in their richt hand, and their Bibles in the left; the tears o' their greetin wives, and dochters, and sisters, and sweethearts, fa'in thick as a simmer shower, while they stand tremblin and sabbin, and pleadin wi' their freens to flee frae the dangers o' the comin storm. I think I see them wringin their hands and rivin their hair wi' agony, when their entreaties are answered by the deliberate determination o' the auld, and the fiery resolution o' the young, wi' the fearfu assurance that they will conquer or dee. I think I see that little company o' matrons and maidens retirin slowly frae the scene o' confusion; while aye noo and then some kind-hearted youth,

wha convoys and comforts them, fa's oot frae the band, and rins back to the ranks. Then they begin singin a hymn o' praise to the God o' battles, wha is able to withstand the powerfu, and protect the oppressed; and immediately—when the crack o' the guns and the clang o' the swords has convinced them that the deadly wark is indeed begun—they are kneelin doon on the grass, wi' their een turned up to heaven, and sabbin oot wordless prayers for the success and the safety o' their freens; there is that little band o' heroes, noo broken and driven back by superior numbers, noo rallyin around their leader, and returnin to the charge wi' a shout o' triumph that maks a' the hills ring; they are noo ance mair repulsed, and nearly borne down by the heavy onset o' their mair skilfu enemies—and, just as my heart begins to tremble for their sakes, I hear the cheers o' a fresh reinforcement o' countrymen, and see their swords brandishin owre the brae, as they rush down to the assistance o' their freens, wha welcome them to the ranks wi' the inspirin war-cry o' the party, 'God and oor country!' The bluidy persecutors are at last broken and dispersed afore the irresistible charge o' the united *pawtriots;* and, while they are scamperin frae the field wi' mony a toom saddle in their train, the victors are busy, devoutly offerin up thanks to Heaven for the battle they hae won.

"But this is no a', sir. I think I see the women folk returnin to the scene o' strife, to lament owre the dead, and to administer consolation to the deein. There is a puir widow supportin the lifeless head o' her husband—kissin his bluidy lips i' the agonies o' her grief, and strivin to close the gapin wounds, that gie nae mair pain to the body that bears them; a beautifu and an affectionate dochter kneelin by the side o' her expirin parent, twinin her arms around his neck, and droonin wi' her bitter lamentations the deep groans o' the deein man; a band o' sisters are noo endeavourin to bear awa the dead body o' a fair-haired striplin,

wha had been the pride o' their family, and the joy o' their hearts; and there is ane there wha, though nae relation to the youth, feels his fate mair deeply than the nearest o' his kin; upon her pale face there is a fearfu struggle between modesty and grief—the last overcomes, and, forgetfu o' the presence o' ony but the dead, she clasps him in her arms, while her breast heaves and sabs like ane wha is suffocatin wi some unutterable feelin! Then there are her neebors, wha never kenned onything o' her affections, till death had divulged them, remarkin, in the language o' Scripture, 'Behold how she loved him!' But, 'deed, sir, I maun hae dune; for ye'll be like to think that I've gane clean daft athegither wi' sae muckle nonsense; and I maun confess, that, when I get on thae auld stories, I haena guid gettin aff them again."

"I just think," said the stranger, "that, if you *had* lived in the days of the Covenant, you would have been a most inveterate conventicler; and, to confess a truth, had I lived at the same period, I would most likely have been found in the same ranks; for, ere I arrived at that age when men are ashamed to cry, I often wept most heartily over the sufferings of the poor hillmen. But night approaches; and, as I suppose I have a long way to go before I can get a bed, I would thank you to direct me the nearest road to Cupar."

"To Cupar, sir?" said James, in surprise. "Ye dinna surely intend to gang to Cupar this nicht?"

"No," said the stranger; "I only intend to go as far as the first public-house where I can find accommodation for the night; but that will not be just at hand, I believe."

"Atweel no, sir," said James; "for there's no a public-house on the road to Cupar nearer than John Denmill's—and that's at Easter Fernie a' the gate. But John's a queer chap, and he *will* divert ye, if ye ance get there."

"Well," said the stranger, "a good fire, a good supper,

and a jolly landlord, make the best entertainment for a traveller on a winter evening."

Our two friends proceeded for a short distance farther together; and before they parted, James not only gave the young man the best instructions he could with respect to the road, but also invited him to come to his cottage, which was just at hand, and partake of some bread and cheese, assuring him at the same time "that he wad get nae meat on the hill, and that his guidwife wad be as proud as a duchess to hae sic a guest under her roof."

The stranger thanked James most heartily for his kindness, but civilly declined the offered entertainment. They parted with mutual esteem. James went home with his meal, and the stranger went on his way.

By this time the sun had sunk to the verge of the horizon, and the sky, which had been previously clear, began to overcast. A fresh gale, too, sprung up from the east, and blew full in the stranger's face. Night was approaching fast; and he had five miles to travel upon an intricate hilly road, before he could reach any place of shelter. The moon, upon which he had depended for light, now threatened to be of little service; for though she occasionally burst upon his eye through the ragged edges of the driving clouds, it was but a momentary flash, which deepened, instead of dissipating the surrounding darkness. He buttoned his coat, drew his hat closer down upon his head, and made all the speed he could against the tempest, which now blew so violently that it sometimes brought him to a dead stand; and notwithstanding of his perilous circumstances, he could not refrain from laughing at himself, as he struggled with the viewless element which opposed his progress, and whistled defiance to his vengeance.

He at length came to a place where the road divided, and, turning his back to the storm, he stood for a few minutes to recollect the instructions which he had received from his

late guide. A number of little lights now caught his eye, twinkling from the cottage windows in the vale below; and as he again proceeded on his way, he could not help looking back, and indulging a momentary feeling of envy over the condition of those who were sitting warm and dry by their own firesides, while he was toiling amid the tempest. The poorest inhabitants of these cottages, thought he, are, for the present, blessed, when compared with me. They possess all the comforts of home, and perhaps do not appreciate their worth, while I am destitute of all but a deep knowledge of the value of what I do not possess.

As he advanced, the lights began to disappear. He seemed to have passed beyond the limits of the inhabited country, and nothing was to be seen but an uncertain road before him, and darkness on every side. The storm grew wilder, and the doubtful path, which he had previously pursued, terminated in a number of little tracks, which diverged in all directions among the furze, as if they had been formed by a flock of sheep scattered over the hill in search of their pasture. He tried to retrace his steps, in the supposition that he had taken the wrong road; but a blinding shower of snow came driving with the wind, and concealed every object which might have guided him in his return. He became completely bewildered, and every moment increased his confusion. The snow began to drift; and all the stories that he had ever heard of benighted travellers lost among the hills rushed into his mind with painful distinctness. He began to run in the direction, as he supposed, of the little hamlets which he had passed in the afternoon; but his feet got entangled among the gorse and broom which covered the hill, and he fell several times at full length among the snow. He stood still and listened, with the faint expectation that he might hear some sound which would lead him to the abodes of men. Something tinkled at a distance, between the gusts of the storm, like

the ringing of a bell. He immediately shaped his course by the sound, and was glad to hear that it grew louder as he advanced. Though he could not conjecture the purpose of a bell in that deserted region, yet such it certainly was; and, as no bell will ring without motion, he trusted to find some one who would be able to direct him to a place of shelter. But, after he had walked for a considerable time, at his utmost speed, he found himself very little nearer the object of his pursuit, which seemed to retire as fast as he advanced. He again began to run, and soon had the satisfaction to find himself within a very few yards of the sound; but still he could not perceive the object from which it proceeded. The mysterious bellringer seemed to increase his speed, as if he had discovered a pursuer, and determined to elude his grasp.

The stranger was out of breath; he paused to listen. The bell still rung, and still retired, though at a less rapid rate. He had never believed in ghosts nor fairies; but this mysterious phenomenon seemed to confirm his nurse's tales, and make "chimeras true." He was not one, however, who would shrink from phantoms without evidence of their existence.

"Honest, honest, Iago!" said he, quoting Shakspere,

'If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.'

But, devil or ghost, I will hunt thee to thy den, and if I can overtake thee, I will tread thee under my feet."

So saying, he renewed the chase, and, in a few minutes, the bell was again jingling at a fearful rate, almost among his feet. He called out to the flying mystery to stop and speak with him. No answer was made; but his words seemed to produce some effect; for in a moment more the bell was off in another direction, tinkling and jingling as loudly as ever.

"You shall not escape me thus," said the stranger, who had quite forgotten his own bewildered condition in his

earnestness to discover the cause of this unaccountable noise.

He again turned, and followed the bell with his utmost speed; and, after a long pursuit, and many doublings and windings among the broom, he at length tumbled over some soft body, which rolled among his feet. He grasped it in his arms and listened. The bell had ceased to jingle, and nothing was to be heard but the howling of the wind and the rustling of the drift.

"I have you now, my boy," said the stranger; "and I will bring you to a severe reckoning for all this sport."

"Bae, !" cried the terrified bellringer, struggling to escape from the rude grasp which held him.

"Bae, !" said the stranger, imitating the voice of the animal. "What a silly pursuit I have been engaged in ! But I am glad to find that I am not alone on these wild hills in this wild night."

The young man's knowledge of rural economy convinced him that he had chased from his companions a poor sheep, who had been intrusted with a bell about his neck, as was the custom in many parts of the country, to enable the shepherd to discover his flock in the morning. The adventure of the renowned Don Quixote occurred to his mind, and he could not help laughing at himself even in the midst of his misery.

Both the sheep and the man were completely exhausted, and they lay still together for some time among the snow; but the piercing blast and the gathering drift soon convinced the latter that he must either renew his exertions, or perish with his fleecy companion beneath the accumulating heap. He accordingly started up, and proceeded—he knew not where. His imagination became haunted with the horrors of his condition, and the idea

> "Of covered pits unfathomably deep,
> A dire descent, beyond the reach of frost;

Of faithless bogs; of precipices huge,
Smoothed up with snow"—

so paralysed his powers that he could scarcely move. But again

"The thoughts of home
Rush'd on his nerves, and call'd their vigour forth."

He now found himself descending the hillside; but whether it was the same side which he had ascended, or some other, he could not conjecture. By this time the snow had accumulated to a considerable depth in the hollows; and he frequently plunged into it up to the middle before he was aware. He pulled out his watch to try if he could ascertain the hour; but he could not. He tried his voice, in the hope that some one might hear him, and come to his assistance; but his feeble cry died away unanswered upon the blast. His situation was a desperate one, and he resolved to make one desperate effort more for existence. He turned his back to the storm, determined to run before it as far as he was able; and, should he perish, if possible to perish upon his feet. He had not proceeded far, however, when he tumbled over a steep bank, and rolled from hillock to hillock till he reached the bottom of the den in a state of insensibility. When he again recovered, he found himself beneath the storm, stretched among the undrifted snow, which was lying about a foot deep around him, while close by his side a brawling stream was dashing over the large stones which, like him, had rolled down the hill, and rested in the bottom of the glen. "Here," thought the stranger, "I have at last found a place where I may die in peace; and it is, perhaps, better to give up the struggle, then again to rush into the tempest only to perish beneath its pitiless pelting."

What were his religious feelings in the prospect of death we know not, but his home and his friends, the grief which his early fate would occasion, and the melancholy satisfac-

tion which they would derive from bestowing the last rites upon his lifeless remains, were present to his imagination. And, lest they should be deprived of the performance of these sadly-pleasing duties, by the ignorance of those who found him, he pulled out his pocket-book, and endeavoured to write his own name, with the name of his father's farm, and the name of the parish in which it was situated.

While thus engaged, in that

> "Hopeless certainty of mind
> Which makes us feel at length resign'd
> To *that* which our foreboding years
> Presents the worst and last of fears,"

the deep sonorous sound of a well-blown horn fell upon his ears, and roused him to fresh exertions. He had crossed the burn and clambered to the top of the bank before the blast had ceased; and, as he endeavoured to fix the direction of the sound, the horn was again winded. It seemed not to be very distant. Hope invigorated his weary limbs, and he dashed through the opposing wreaths as stoutly as if his toils had been only newly begun. Another blast was blown, and he continued to run upon the sound till it ceased, and it was not again repeated.

He recollected that it was common for the farmers, in many parts of Scotland, to blow a horn at eight o'clock on the winter evenings, for the purpose of warning their servants to attend to the suppering of the horses; and he hoped that, if he could keep to the proper direction, this might lead him to some hospitable farmhouse, where he would soon forget the horrors of the storm before a comfortable fire. He now proceeded more leisurely, striving not to deviate from the course which the horn had induced him to take; and keeping a sharp look-out on all sides, and an intense attention to every sound, in the expectation that some cottage light might twinkle upon his eye, or some human voice reach his ear, in the intervals of the deafening blast.

But still he could discover no sight nor sound of man; and the shifting tempest, which attacked him from every direction, soon confounded all his ideas of time and distance. In some places, too, the snow had accumulated in such immense masses, that he could not pass through them; and the circuits which he was obliged to make tended farther to confuse his mind. His spirits again began to sink, and his limbs to falter; and that sluggish indifference which follows the extinction of hope again took possession of his senses. But, while he was dragging himself onward with slow and feeble steps, a new and extraordinary noise broke upon his ear. He stood still and listened; but he could not conjecture the cause of it. It seemed to mingle with, and yet it was different from, the ravings of the storm. It proceeded from one quarter, and remained steadily in one place. There was a mingling of sounds, like the dashing of waves, the rushing of winds, and the jingling of a thousand little bells, accompanied occasionally by a harsh, guttural cry, like that which is emitted by a band of wild geese when disturbed in their "watery haunt."

Though this mysterious noise was more appalling than attractive, and though it promised neither rest nor shelter to the stranger, yet it operated upon his curiosity, and induced him to continue his exertions. The terrific sounds grew louder and louder as he advanced. The clouds of snow, which were every moment dashed into his face, prevented him from seeing more than a few yards before him; and an involuntary shudder passed over his frame, as he thought that he might even now be toppling upon the brink of some dreadful gulf, and that another step might precipitate him into destruction. Something terrible was certainly at hand; but what was the nature of the danger was beyond his powers of conception.

The unaccountable noise, which was now thundering beneath him, resembled most the dashing of a cataract, or the

roaring of the ocean, when its far-accumulated waves are broken into foaming madness among hidden rocks. He stood still, and gazed intently in the direction of the sound. The storm abated a little in its violence, and he thought he could perceive a black expanse at a little distance stretching out before him. He advanced a few steps nearer it. It was tossing in fearful commotion, and here and there streaked with lines, and dotted with patches of white. It was evidently water; but whether lake, river, or ocean, was all a mystery.

"Can it be possible," thought he, 'that the storm has insensibly driven me in the right direction? Do I now stand among the rocks that look down upon the breaker-beaten bay of St Andrews? Or have I returned again to the banks of the Tay? Or can this be the little loch which I passed in the afternoon, and which then lay stretched out in frozen tranquillity beneath me?"

His heart grew sick and his brain dizzy with conjecture. He turned away from the stunning scene with a shiver of despair. A strange sense of torpidity and madness passed along his nerves—it was the confused energy of an active soul, struggling with the numbedness of exhausted nature. The snow seemed to swim around him—his eyes became heavy, and, when he closed them, numberless phantoms seemed to pass before him, like figures in a dream. In this state of drowsy insensibility, he lost for a time all recollection of his sufferings—his blood began to stagnate in his veins, and the icy coldness of death was stealing over his extremities, when a covey of wild ducks swept past, and their short, sharp cries startled him again into consciousness of his condition. When he opened his eyes, a faint light seemed to be glimmering from a hill-side about a hundred yards above him. It was now seen, and now lost, as the clouds of drift passed between him and the place from which it issued. But still it was there; and its dim, sha-

dowy lustre was to him like life to the dead. Hope again returned to his heart, and animation to his limbs; and in a few minutes he had reached the window of a little cottage, which was so completely drifted up with snow on all sides save that on which he stood, that any one might have passed in broad daylight without supposing it to be a human habitation.

The stranger looked in at the window. The fire, which was composed of peats, had been covered up with ashes to prevent them from wasting through the night; but, by this time, the small dust had passed through the grate, and there only remained a little heap of live embers, which cast a sombre glow around the interior of the cottage. The family were in bed. The stranger rapped gently on the window, and then listened for an answer; but nothing stirred. He rapped a little louder, and again listened.

"What's that, Jamie?" said a female voice within

"Hoch, hoch, hey!" said another, yawning and stretching out his arms from the same box or bed, as if to relieve them from the uneasiness of lying long in one position. It was evident that the voice of the first speaker had awakened the second, without communicating to his mind the purport of the question, which was again repeated.

"What was that Jamie?"

"What was *what*, lassie?" said the wondering husband. 'I see naething by ordinar."

"Man," returned the guidwife, "did you no hear yon awfu rattle at the windock? My flesh's a' creepin, for I fear something no canny's aboot the back o' the house. It was just like the noise that was heard at Willy Patty's windock last year afore his mither dee'd."

"Havers, lassie; ye've just been dreamin," said the guidman, who was anxious to quiet his partner's fears, though he was not altogether free from some tremours himself.

The stranger gave another rap.

"Hear ye that, then, Jamie?" said the guidwife. "It's no sic a dream, I trow; for that's something awfu."

"Deed is't," said James, who was now convinced that the "rattle" was not quite so terrible as it had been represented; "it's an awfu thing for ony puir body to be oot in sic a nicht as this; but let's be thankfu, Nanny, that we hae a roof to hap oorsels frae the storm, and a door to let a hooseless body in at."

James flung himself around, and disentangled his fêet from the bedclothes, with the intention of going immediately to admit the stranger; but, ere he got away from the bedside, his "better half" laid hold of him, and cried out, in great perturbation—

"Stop, Jamie—stop, I beseech ye; and consider weel what ye're aboot; for ye ken that, forby the danger o' robbers and rascals, the evil spirits just delight to range aboot in sic a nicht as this, like roarin lions, seekin wham they may devour; and wha kens what may come owre ye, if ye pit yersel i' their mercîment."

"Havers, woman!" said James again; "let me go, I tell ye; for I'll speak at the windock, and spier if he wants shelter, though it war auld Satan himsel."

Nanny relaxed her grasp; but she seemed determined that the guidman should encounter no danger which she did not take a share of; and she too sprung to the floor, and followed him to the window.

"Wha's there?" cried James, in a voice that showed he was neither to be *cowed* by fiends, fairies, ghosts, nor men.

"A bewildered stranger," was the reply.

"Weel," said James, "a great stranger may be a great villain; but, for a' that, if I understand my Bible richtly, the words, 'I was a stranger and ye took me in,' will never be addressed to ane wha has the hard heart to refuse a hameless wanderer the shelter o' his roof in sic a nicht as this. Sae just gang ye aboot to the tither side o' the hoose,

and come alang the fore wa' a' the gate, till ye find the door, and I'll let ye in."

"Thank you!" said the stranger.

Nanny, who now discovered that the object of all her fears was neither ghost nor goblin, but a conversable and civil creature of her own species, thought that her husband might be safely trusted in his presence without her support; and she accordingly returned again to her bed.

James lighted the lamp, and went to admit the stranger; but, when he opened the door, he opened no passage for his entrance. A solid wall of snow still separated the guidman and his intended guest.

"Preserve's a'!" cried the former, "that's been an awfu' nicht, indeed. The door's drifted up to the lintel; and there's no a hole i' the hale hicht o't, that a mouse could creep oot or in through. Are ye aye there yet, freen?" (addressing the stranger, who answered in the affirmative.) "Aweel, aweel," he continued, "ye maun just content yersel awhile or I get a spade and try and mak some oot-gate in't."

James got a spade, and commenced to delve the snow into the passage, between the *hallant* and the outer door; but he had no sooner broken down a part of the barrier, than the insidious drift entered the aperture, and, getting under his shirt, which was the only garment he had on, it whirled about his bare legs. He persisted for awhile, but his powers of perseverance ultimately forsook him. He flung down the spade, and, as every gust of wind brought a fresh volley of snow whistling about his ankles, he leaped as high as the henroost, which formed the ceiling of the lobby, would permit.

"Preserve's a', that's dreadfu!" he at length cried out, making a most magnificent jump at the same time. "Flesh and bluid canna endure that—it wad gar a horse swither. Ye'll just hae to thole awee till I get my claes on, lad."

James bounded into the house, and commenced immediately to get his shivering limbs conducted into the proper openings of a pair of canvas trousers. But this was no easy task. He had got one foot in, and the other within a few inches of the entrance, when his great toe unluckily got entangled in one of the pockets of the garment, and, as he was striving to preserve his equilibrium, by hopping through the house backwards upon one leg, the stranger, who had forced himself through the aperture which he had made in the door way, entered like a moving mass of snow. James at length succeeded, by the support of the bed, which happily resisted his retrograde movement, in getting on his clothes; and then all his attention was directed to the comfort of his guest.

"Dear me, man," said he, taking hold of the stranger's arm with the one hand, and a broom with the other, "ye'll need hauf-an-hoor's soopin afore we get a sicht o' ye. I'm sure ye're unco far frae comfortable below that wread o' snaw."

As the stranger was standing before the fire, while James was endeavouring to clear away the snow from his neck and shoulder, the sudden change of temperature which he had experienced, expanding the fluids faster than the vessels which contained them, produced in his extremities that agonising sensation which is more forcibly expressed by the Scottish word *dinnling*, than by any other word with which we are acquainted. Sickness and pain overpowered his exhausted nerves. His eyes turned wildly up to the roof of the cottage. He gave one suffocating gasp for breath, and sank senseless upon the floor. James seized him in his arms, and called out to his wife—

"O Nanny, Nanny, woman! get up and help's here! The puir callant's fa'en into a drow, and I'm feared he's gaun to dee upon our hands athegither. Get up, woman, and let's try if onything can be dune to bring him aboot again."

Nanny sprang up at the call of her husband; and, seizing the stranger by the hand, cried out—

"Preserve's a', Jamie! he's perfectly perishin'; his hand is as cauld and stiff as the poker. I maun get on the kettle and heat some water to thaw the snaw aff him."

'Na, na," cried James, "that wad mak him waur, woman. Rin ye to the door and get a gowpen o' snaw, and rub his hands wi' *it* and a rough clout time aboot, and sprinkle some cauld water in his face, and he'll may be sune come till himsel again."

"Jamie," said the guidwife, in a tone of gentle remonstrance, "the lad's gotten owre muckle snaw and cauld water already; that's just what's the matter wi' him. I maun hae up the fire and get something warm till 'im."

"Ye're haverin, Nanny," said James, who was too much agitated to be respectful. "Gang ye and get the snaw, I tell ye; for ye understand naething o' the matter."

"Aweel, aweel, then," said Nanny, "ye hae mair skill o' doctory than me, Jamie; but it's a very unnatural-like cure, to rub cauld snaw on a man perishin' wi' the cauld."

Nanny got the snow, and commenced the operation with great activity, while James reached his hand to a pitcher which was standing near, and sprinkled a few drops of water in the stranger's face. He soon began to show some symptoms of returning animation, and James earnestly inquired—

"How are ye yet? Are ye better noo?"

After a considerable pause, the stranger replied, as if the question had only then reached him—

"I'm better now, I thank you!"

"God be praised that it's sae!" said James. "Gie him a drink, Nanny, woman, and he'll be a' richt in a wee again."

Nanny brought some water, and, while she was endeavouring to pour it into the stranger's mouth, James got a full view of his face, and cried out—

"He's the very young gentleman that I cam doon the hill wi' this afternoon. Dear me, what a nicht he's had, wanderin amang the drift sin yon time!"

"He's a bonny laddie at ony rate," said Nanny, looking close into his face. "Ye'll no grudge to let him get some heat noo, Jamie. Help me aff wi' his coat and his shoon; and we'll just coup him inowre in oor ain warm bed, here."

"That's weel thocht on," said James. "I canna say but ye hae sometimes a gliffin o' sense aboot ye, Nanny."

The stranger soon recovered so far as to be able to put off his own clothes; and though he remonstrated strongly against taking possession of the honest couple's bed, they would not be resisted in their kindness; and he was obliged to comply. Nanny now took the management of the patient wholly into her own hands; and, as she had all her life considered heat the only remedy for a man perishing with cold, she began to make preparations for applying her own cure. She stirred the fire, supplied it with fresh fuel, laid a brick across it on each side, and placed a panful of water between them. She then took James's leather apron, and folded it so as to form a substitute for a fan; and with it she blew the slumbering embers into flaming activity. In a very short time the bricks were *red*, and the water boiling hot. The former were immersed in water, and then wrapped up in flannel, and laid to the stranger's feet and breast; the latter was converted into gruel, which, though not very thirsty, he drank with a very good appetite—having missed his supper that night on the hill.

"Noo, sir," said Nanny, "ye maun just lie doon and try if ye can get a gloffen o' sleep; for I'll warrant ye're baith tired and drowsy, after sic a wrastle amang the snaw. Gin ye want onything, Jamie and me 'll just be sittin at the ingle here; but we'll mak nae din to disturb ye."

Thus heated within and without, the stranger soon lost all recollection of his wanderings, in a deep and refreshing sleep.

"The storm without micht rair and rustle,
He didna mind the storm a whustle."

James betook himself to his old companion, Josephus; and Nanny sat down by the other side of the fire, and resumed her evening's employment, which had been the knitting of a pair of stockings for the guidman. She now felt all a mother's anxiety for the comfort of the stranger; and she frequently rose and peeped into the bed, to see how he rested; then returned to her husband, with a smile, and whispered into his ear—

"The lad's sleepin as sound as a tap, yet."

The night passed away; and by the time that daylight dawned down the *lum*—the little windows being drifted up with the snow—Nanny had prepared a warm breakfast for the stranger, the guidman, and herself. It consisted of oatmeal porridge, served up in two wooden platters, with a jugful of milk and three horn spoons set down on the table between them. Nanny now awakened the stranger by asking how he had rested. She then took his clothes, which had been carefully dried and warmed before the fire; and, handing them into the bed, which had to serve the purpose of a dressing-room also, she closed the lids—remarking, that "the parritch was ready; and it wad be better to sup them afore they got owre cauld." The stranger dressed, and took a seat beside his kind entertainers. James asked a blessing, apologised for the coarseness of the fare, and despatched his portion of the repast in shorter time than a fashionable cater would take to stir about his coffee and crack the shell of his egg. It occurred to Nanny that she might make the porridge more agreeable to the stranger's delicate taste, by giving him cream, instead of milk, to sup them with. She accordingly brought her evening's *meltith*, and skimmed it into his dish, remarking, at the same time—

"Ye'll no like oor coorse way o' livin, sir; but hunger's guid kitchen, they say, and that's no ill sap, I think, for it

was just drawn frae the coo yestreen." The stranger assured her that he liked the dish exceedingly well; and Nanny added—"Ye'll be used to drappies o' tea, I warrant; but we haena had ootower twa brewins i' the hoose sin we were married; and, though a wee sirple o't may do brawly when the sap's scarce, yet I aye thocht that it was an unco feckless sort o' a diet, for a manbody especially."

After breakfast, the young student (for such was the stranger) gave his entertainers an account of his wildered wanderings on the hill, as we have already narrated them; and James explained all the mysteries which he had met to his entire satisfaction. We shall only give his exposition of the last; namely, the fearful minglings of sounds which had alarmed him so much when he approached the lake. These were occasioned by the breaking up of the ice, which, driven ashore in innumerable fragments by the wind, rose and fell with every wave, making a confused tinkling, like the ringing of a thousand little bells.

The storm had now abated; and, though the roads in many places were entirely blocked up, by keeping along the high ground it was possible for a person on foot to pursue his journey. The stanger, who was travelling to the College of St. Andrews, prepared to depart. He offered Nanny such a sum of money as he could spare, in acknowledgement of her kindness; but she refused it.

"Na, sir!" said she, "we'll hae nae reward. Only look what a dad o' a stockin I've wrocht, that wadna been wrocht gin ye hadna been here; and the guidman's gotten as muckle lear oot o' that auld book, as may ser' him for a twalmonth to crack aboot; sae, ye see, we hae made some profit o' yer visit, forby a' the pleasure o' yer company."

James also refused money; and still further enhanced his kindness, by accompanying the stranger to the top of the

hill, where he gave him the best directions with respect to the road, and bade him an affectionate farewell.

Many years after this, a medical student from the neighbourhood was attending the lectures of the celebrated Dr. B—— of Edinburgh, who one evening intimated a desire to speak with him after the class was dismissed. He accordingly waited, and the doctor opened the conversation by inquiring if he knew an individual of the name of James W——, who lived near the village of Lindores. He was answed in the affirmative.

"Well," said the doctor, "I owe my life to the exertions of that old man and his wife; and I received my first lessons in medical science from them. When I was a student at the College of St. Andrews, I lost my way among the hills, and was nearly smothered among the snow. I at last discovered their cottage, and was kindly admitted. Like all good knights of *misventure*, I fainted and fell down upon the floor. James and his wife held a consultation over me, and I afterwards came to learn that even here 'doctors differed.' James was an Emperic, and argued from experience, or experiment, that cold water and friction was the best remedy for numbed fingers. Nanny adhered to the Dogmatics, and inferred, from reason and nature, that heat was the best application for driving away cold.

"Thus Epilogism and Dogmatism contended in the mouths of people who had probably never heard of the names of Aristotle and Plato in their lives. But, in my case, both the systems were adopted with advantage. I was resuscitated by the empiric with cold, and recovered by the theorist with heat. And, what is more wonderful still, my kind physicians, unlike all other members of the profession, refused to take any fee. But they are not forgotten. They cast their bread upon the water, and they shall find it again after many days."

We shall only add, that in a short time after this James

received an elegant silver-mounted snuff-box, bearing the following inscription:—"From Dr B—— to James W——. 'I was a stranger, and ye took me in.'"

Nanny at the same time received a more useful present; and both rejoiced that they had once possessed an opportunity of being useful to a man whose genius had made him an honour to his country, and an ornament to the profession to which he belonged.

THE CROOKED COMYN.

Walter Comyn, Earl of Menteith, one of the "three Comyns," all earls, who, in the minority of Alexander III., possessed so much power in Scotland as to be able to oppose all the other nobility together, was a very remarkable man. Of low stature, deformed in his person, dark in his complexion, of gigantic strength—he possessed the spirit of a lion with the subtlety of a fox. Neither in the planning nor the executing of a political scheme could any man in Scotland or England cope with him. He made his two brothers, and the thirty-three knights who joined him against the measures of the English regency, his puppets, allowing them no will of their own, but subjugating them entirely to his direction. He could read the human countenance even of a courtier of Henry III. of England as easily as he could do the court hand of the clerks of his time; and, to complete his character, he so falsified the muscles of his face, by mixing up smiles and frowns in such a thorough confusion of activity and change, that no one could tell his thoughts or his feelings.

His wife, the countess, was directly the reverse of her husband. Tall in her person, handsomely formed, with graceful movements and accomplished manners, she was accounted open-hearted, good-humoured, approaching to simplicity, destitute of all guile and deceit. Her countenance wore a continual smile, and was so open and ingenuous, that it might be read like the page of a book. The best proof of her goodness was the kindness she exhibited to the deformed partner of her life. She boasted—and he admitted—that she was the only person who could read him, not from her powers of penetration, but from his

yielding relaxation of the deceptive discipline of his face and manners. He often remarked that it was fortunate for him that his Countess Margaret was so much of a child; for he felt and acknowledged that it was only in the presence of children that he considered himself safe in throwing off his disguise, and appearing for a time in his natural character. Such are the effects of ambition.

A legend saith that, on one occasion, the following conversation took place between these dissimilar yet well-mated companions—

"Wert thou not so simple, fair Margaret," said the earl, "I would suspect thou hadst no great affection for him whom King Henry calleth the 'Crooked Comyn.' Men may love me for my subtlety and power, from interest; my brothers because I am their brother, from instinct; and my wolf-dog, Grim, because I join him in the chase. Now, to gratify my humour for frolic on this night when I think I have overturned the power of the English regent, tell me what thou lovest me for, good simpleton; for I cannot doubt that simpletons have their fancies like other folks; and, if thou dost not love me, why hast thou prepared for me, even now on this night of my triumph, that cup of warm milk curdled with sack which thou callest a posset? I asked it not of thee, and love must have suggested it."

"What should I love my Walter for," replied Countess Margaret, "but his noble qualities, placed in a person the defects of which, as he states them, I cannot see? Custom hath made thee straight, and love hath embellished both thy mind and body; but, above all, I love thee because thou lovest me; for it is an old saying in our cottage, that love begets love, and"—patting him playfully on the cheek—"my heart must have been barren indeed, if, after ten years of thy wooing, it produced no more affection than was able to prepare for thee a posset of milk and sack on the evening of the day of thy triumph."

"Thou hast made a good turn of the subject, simpleton," said Comyn. "If I beat my political opponents during the day, thou worstest me at night by thy ingenious pleasantry. Thou conquerest even nature's twists and torsels, for my crooked mind and deformed body become straight under the soft ministration of thy simple manners. I cannot help sometimes thinking that, if it had been thy fate to be wedded to such a fair piece of nature's handiwork as the English baron, John Russel, who banqueted with us yesterday—a thing of red and white pigment—an automaton mannerist, without a mind—every woman's slave, and never his own master—thy simplicity would have lost its power, for, having no foil, it would have merged into the idiocy of thy husband, and you would have become a pair of quarrelsome simpletons."

"And if thou hadst got a wife," answered Countess Margaret, smiling, "as deep and subtle as thyself, the charm thou hast for me—thy mental superiority—would have been lost, for want of a foil; but thou wert too clever to fall into that snare, and didst avoid artful and knowing women, though beautiful, as anxiously as I, if I were still unmarried, would avoid that fair painted Jackalent thou hast mentioned, the English baron, John Russel. Sheep, thou knowest often fight, and get entangled in each other's horns. They are then an easy prey to the wolves. I would not give my 'Crooked Comyn' for all the Russels of England."

"Thy rattle pleaseth me, sweet Margaret," said Comyn. "But how is this? I feel ill. What can ail Comyn on the night of his day of triumph? These pains rack me. So sudden an attack! These are not usual feelings that now assail me."

"Ill in the midst of health!" cried Countess Margaret. "What meaneth this?—where is the complaint? Speak, dear husband! tell thy devoted wife what may enable her to yield thee relief."

"A burning pain wringeth my heart," replied Comyn, with an expression of agony, "and unmanneth a soul that never knew subjugation; that is to me the only symptom of danger. When Comyn trembleth, death cannot be far distant."

"Thou alarmest me, dear husband," cried Countess Margaret; "speak not in such ominous terms of what I could not survive one solitary moon. What can I minister to thee?"

"Water, water from the icy springs of Lapland!" cried the frantic earl; "yet the frozen sea will not quench this burning fire! What availeth now the wiles, the subtlety, the courage of Scotland's proudest earl? I never was master or director of such pains as these. Death! how successfully dost thou earn thy reputation of being the grim king! Water, beloved Margaret, for this miniature hell!"

"It is here, good heart," cried Countess Margaret. "God bless its efficacy!—drink."

"It is as nothing," cried Comyn, after swallowing the contents of the cup. "It is as nothing—these tormina laugh at the puny quencher of fires fiercer than those of Gehenna. I must submit. Thou wilt have no terce from my earldom, wherein I am not yet feudally seised. Alas! shall my innocent be left terceless—a beggar—the dependant of my brothers? 'Sdeath, this is worse than these scorching fires! Call the clerk of St John's—quick."

The countess flew out of the room, and in a short time returned with the clerical lawyer.

"Attend, sir," cried Comyn. "Thou seest one in the hands of death; prepare, with the greatest speed of thy quill, a liferent disposition of my whole earldom in favour of Countess Margaret, my wife. I shall then confess to thee, and thou shalt pray for me."

"The liferent disposition I shall make out," replied the clerk of St John's; "for Comyn's commands must be obeyed. But I, in behalf of the holy brethren of our order, must tell

thee, noble earl, that our prayers can be of little avail if they are limited, in point of time, to the period of thy sojourn on earth. Thy mausoleum must be lighted for ten years with wax tapers, a thousand masses must be said for thy soul, and a pilgrimage to the Holy Land must be performed, ere we can hope to bring thee out of purgatory. If thou leavest the liferent of thy earldom to Countess Margaret—the fee going to thy eldest brother as heir—what is to pay the monks of St John for all their labours, in thus endeavouring to free thee from the pains of that temporary place of punishment?"

"No purgatory can equal these pains, man," cried the earl. "Thou shalt have my earldom this instant for one hour's relief from this hell-fire."

"Why, good priest," said the lady, "canst thou thus talk of worldly possessions to one in such agony? While I am thus ministering to the body, it would better become thee to minister to the soul, while it is still in its earthly tabernacle. I, his dear wife, asked for no liferent, and yet thou requirest a mortification."

"It is for his own sake," said the priest, "that I have recommended the provision of the means for saving his soul. We are not bees, to produce wax for tapers; nor birds of paradise, to fly from hence to Jerusalem, and sit on the holy shrine, without being fed as other birds; nor are we canonised saints, requiring no meat nor drink. We must live, or we cannot pray. Wilt *thou*, madam, give up a half of thy liferent, to aid in the redemption of the soul thou lovest so ardently?"

"Thou hast heard my lord's commands," rejoined the lady. "I cannot allow my mind to be occupied at present with thoughts of that contemptible trash thou callest gold. What is all the earldom of the Comyns to the preservation of the life of my dear husband?—Walter, dear Walter! what can be done for thee?"

"The priest hath already my commands," answered the earl. "The parchment!—the parchment!—and—and—water!—water!"

"Hie thee away to thy work, good monk," cried the lady. "There's no time for parley. Away. Thou seest that *I* deny him not his request."

"Water costeth little," said the priest, with a smile of suspicion, "and availeth little either to assuage these pains or those of purgatory."

The priest retired, and in the course of an hour returned, with the deed extended, and two witnesses at his back. The paper was read. Comyn was still able to sign it. He attached his name, and in a few minutes expired.

Thus died that remarkable man. A dark story now arose in Scotland: Countess Margaret had encouraged a criminal passion for the English baron, John Russel, and was openly accused of having poisoned her husband, by means of a posset of milk and sack, to make way for her paramour, whom she married with indecent haste. Insulted and disgraced, she and her husband were thrown into prison, despoiled of their estate, and compelled to leave the kingdom. It was afterwards rumoured in Scotland that she quarrelled with Russell—who ill-used her, and stood in continual fear of being treated in the same way as Comyn—and, finally, drowned herself in the river Thames.

END OF VOL. X.

Manchester: Printed by A. Ireland & Co., Pall Mall.

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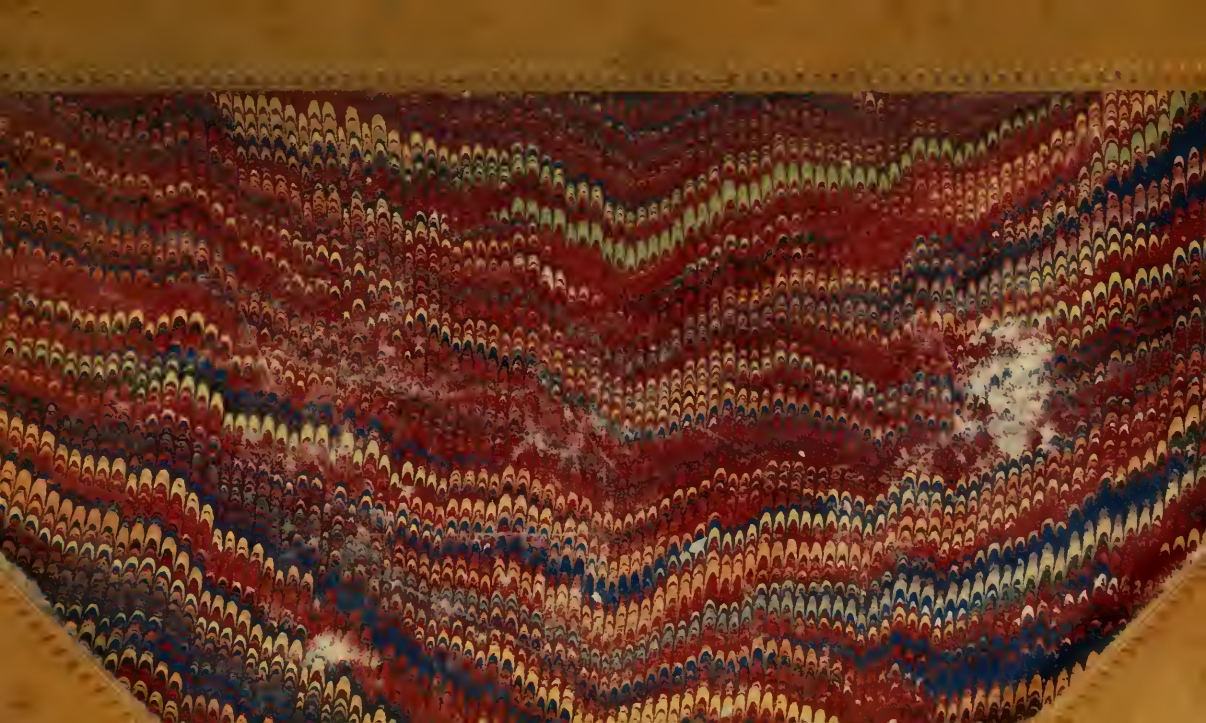
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